

"All The News That's UNFIT to Print"

Joachim Joesten's

TRUTH LETTER

An Antidote to Official Mendacity and Newsfaking in the Press

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EDITORIAL : Heading for Brazil soon, Traveling Professor?

The Art of News-Slanting

I am full of admiration for the ways of the newsmakers. They have a hundred devices, dodges and gimmicks for turning black into white, and the truth upside down. And they work really hard at it, as craftsmen do.

It was a foregone conclusion, of course, that the past masters of news-slanting would outdo themselves in "covering" the Clay Shaw trial in New Orleans. They are living up fully to expectations.

To be sure, there are a few reporters who are making a valiant effort to keep up at least a semblance of objectivity, but even in those rare instances one can sense the ironclad instructions from the home office: No matter what the witnesses say, or the court decides, there was no conspiracy, because the US is not a "banana republic." Clay Shaw is a lily-white, right-thinking free-enterpriser, wrongfully persecuted by that publicity-hunting monster, Jim Garrison. All the news out of New Orleans has to be slanted accordingly, and it is.

In the seconds between the time the words come out of the mouth of a witness for the prosecution and the time they're fed into the teleprinters, they undergo a magical transformation. Instantly, Garrison is "losing a bit of ground," and the defense has "scored a point."

Take, for instance, the case of Perry Russo, favorite whipping-boy of the newsmakers and the Epstein-type of Warren Report critics. He is harassed by the news media even more than by the defense lawyers. Everything Russo has stated in court has been twisted around, garbled, adulterated and then flung back in his teeth with sneering comment. Other witnesses fared little better, unless of course they are put on the stand by the defense, or even only mentioned as possibilities (like that McManes girl in Iowa who doesn't dare show her face in New Orleans).

No district attorney in our time has been the target of so much abuse and scorn as Jim Garrison - because he has promised to tell us the truth and the truth is anathema to the Establishment and its hired scribes.

Leading the pack, as usual, are the Washington Post and the "networks," - CBS, NBC, ABC and CIA News. And the lesser lights follow meekly behind. What a spectacle in a country that prides itself upon having a free press!

Epitaph for RAMPARTS: Here lies the New Left, murdered by the old advertisers.

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They not only perform true miracles of distortion, but also breathtaking somersaults in logic. Take for example that dispatch from New Orleans by New York Post correspondent Carl J. Pelleck (Jan. 24, 1969) which began with these words: "The most macabre facet to the slow-moving trial of Clay L. Shaw, accused of conspiring to murder the late President Kennedy, is that under the law it could be going on if Kennedy were still alive."

What on earth is macabre about that? Almost every day, somewhere in this big world, would-be assassins whose intended victims escaped harm are tried for the attempt. Had the ambush in Dallas failed to do away with the President, there would have been a speedy trial of those implicated, with nothing macabre about it, except the hangman's shadow.

What is really macabre in the case is that it took five-and-a-half years and a conspiracy trial to avenge the death of a President whose assassination should have given rise to a prompt hue-and-cry, a roundup of all conspirators and the meting out of stern justice to all guilty parties.

From the Law Offices of Percy Foreman, 804 South Coast Building, Houston, Tex. comes this letter, dated January 29, 1969:

Dear Mr. Joesten:

Please be advised that I am the attorney of record for Mr. James Earl Ray in the cause styled: The State of Tennessee versus James Earl Ray.

I am in receipt of your "Open Letter" dated January 27, 1969, in which you mention a 45,000 word documentation, copy of which is being airmailed to Judge W. Preston Battle, Rev. Ralph Abernathy, the American Civil Liberties Union and a select group of newspapers.

I would appreciate receiving a copy of this "documentation".

Yours very truly,
(signed) Percy Foreman

And here is my reply:

Munich, Feb. 3, 1969

Dear Mr. Foreman:

I am in receipt of your letter of January 29, 1969, requesting a copy of my documentation on the James Earl Ray case.

The copies I have already airmailed to the Rev. Ralph Abernathy and to the Legal Director, American Civil Liberties Union (as well as to Judge Battle) are designed to help in the defense of Mr. Ray. I am sure either one of these two parties will make their copies available to you for inspection.

If I did not send a copy to you right away, the reason is that I have grounds to believe that you have been discussing with the public defender of Memphis, Mr. Hugh Stanton Jr., and others, the advisability of persuading Mr. Ray to plead guilty. It is my considered opinion that such a plea could not be in the best interests of your client, because he did not kill Dr. Martin Luther King.

It is possible, of course, that I am wrong in my assumption that you are a party to this scheme. If I am and you intend vigorously to defend James Earl Ray instead, I shall be glad to forward to you immediately a copy of my documentation upon written assurance on your part that you will:

(1) Not go along with a guilty plea by your client under any circumstances, and

(2) Give me credit for my work on this case if you make any use of the material I have gathered and the points of information I have developed.

I wish to add specifically that I do not expect ANY KIND OF financial remuneration.

Yours very truly
(signed) Joachim Joesten

Footnotes to the above correspondence:

- (1) The U.S. Post Office, it seems, is performing miracles of speedy delivery these days. The copy of my OPEN LETTER which I sent to Mr. Foreman was dropped into a Munich mailbox on Jan. 28. It reached his desk on the 29th.
- (2) Enclosed with this issue of TRUTH LETTER, is an announcement that my 45,000-word documentation on the Ray case is now available for general distribution. TRUTH LETTER subscribers are entitled to a 40% discount on the posted purchase price of \$ 30 for Vol. I (two parts).

The Net Worth of a Punk

On Feb. 4, 1969, Sirhan B. Sirhan testified about his "financial status." According to an AP dispatch, he "confirmed these income figures" for the past four years: 1965, \$ 984.90; 1966, \$ 2,212.46; 1967, \$ 432.96; 1968, \$ 752.35.

Taking these figures at face value, it is noteworthy that Sirhan's income more than doubled from one year (1965) to the next, then dipped to an abysmal low the following year, rising again substantially the year he killed Senator Kennedy - half of which he spent in jail.

As has been demonstrated in detail in TRUTH LETTER, Sirhan in 1964 (for which no income figure is given) made one trip to the Middle East for the CIA and another in 1966 - his year of greatest affluence. During 1965 he was in the United States, as far as is known, and again in 1967, when he made a scant living indeed.

One gathers from these data, if they are accurate, that Sirhan was not in the permanent employ of the CIA, but was given occasional assignments, the last of which didn't pay off as expected because the assassin was caught. If Sirhan was underpaid by the agency before, he was cheated outright on his most dangerous assignment.

The CIA pays fabulous sums to knowledgeable defectors (I'm sure that Chinese diplomat in The Hague was paid his weight in gold). But the punks, who are a dime a dozen in its ranks, get lean pickings. In fairness to the CIA, however, let us acknowledge that the CIA does provide for its thugs, when they are arrested and tried, by footing the bill for their "priceless lawyers" (cf. TRUTH LETTER, No. 10, p. 5)

MEDITATION- No, They won't be able to suicide me the way they did with that rare bird of a loyal CIA agent, Gary Underhill, who, being right-handed, managed to shoot himself through the head from left to right. Reason is that I never learned to shoot even a toy pistol. Might hit my left foot if I aimed at my right temple. - UNDERHILL?? That reminds me: Coming soon in TRUTH LETTER: A thrilling Kennedy murder mystery: WHO IS JAMES HEPBURN?

Concluding Sylvia Meagher's "Friendly Dissent" (see TL, Nos. 9/10)

Mrs. Meagher writes: "Nor do I agree with my friend Joachim Joesten's reasoning, on the same page of the same issue of Truth letter (Vol. I, No. 3, January 1, 1969, p. 2), that Richard Helms and the CIA are inculpated by virtue of the mere fact that Garrison has 'stated repeatedly' that the Dealey Plaza (should it not be renamed 'Deadly Plaza?') assassins were 'recruited, trained and equipped by the CIA.' Those of us who refused to accept the repeated declarations of Oswald's sole assassinship, by the Warren Commission and other authorities and eminences, even when the accusation was accompanied by a profusion of so-called 'evidence,' surely may not abandon the rigorous standards by which we judged our adversaries and give carte blanche to friends and colleagues to make unsupported or ill-supported charges which we will then elevate to the status of definitive proof."

My reply:

Reading Sylvia Meagher's splendidly researched, and superbly written "Accessories After The Fact," I always had an uneasy feeling that, for all her severity towards the Warren Commission, the Dallas Police, the FBI and other "authorities and eminences," the author had a blind spot (or should I say "soft spot"?) for the CIA. Whenever a mention of the CIA crops into her book, Mrs. Meagher goes for the kid glove treatment. Oh, she has a suspicion all right that Lee H. Oswald may have gone to the Soviet Union "on clandestine assignment by his own government," but apparently the thought that the CIA might have been implicated in the assassination itself has never troubled her sleep.

Her letter of "Friendly Dissent" to me confirms that this is one aspect of the matter where Sylvia Meagher refuses to harbor dark suspicions. And, as usual, she takes it out on her pet peeve, Jim Garrison. Now, I quite agree that the DA still has to offer ironclad proof that the CIA was involved to the extent he has publicly stated, but I should like to point out to Mrs. Meagher that the time for a district attorney to prove his case is in court. The next few weeks undoubtedly will tell the story and will show whether Garrison can put up, or has to shut up.

On the other hand, authors, especially "top cooks" like myself (title bestowed by courtesy of Bob Considine) enjoy a little more license and are free to use sources of information that may not qualify as unassailable evidence in a court of law.

If Mrs. Meagher will refer to Chapters 6 ("The CIA in the Dock") of my book "The Garrison Enquiry" and Chapters 3 and 4 ("Caught in the Act" and "The Weird Case of Gordon Novel") of the companion volume "How Kennedy Was Killed", in which I have set forth at length my case against the CIA in the assassination of President Kennedy, she will observe that most of the materials used in these chapters has come from the New Orleans States-Item, rather than from Jim Garrison. Besides, the published information about the CIA's involvement through such characters as Guy Banister, David Ferrie, Gordon Novel and Jack Ruby - even discounting Oswald - jibes perfectly with everything else that has come to light, over the years, about the CIA and its modus operandi. I'm sure Sylvia Meagher has read "The Invisible Government." Let her re-read it, with one eye on that book and the other on the documented disclosures of the States-Item and the published statements of Jim Garrison. They're all of a piece and fit the same pattern.

Those skyjackings - what a convenient way for the CIA to smuggle agents into Cuba!

Chapter III

Why Robert Kennedy Had to Die

Why? Why? Why? - Children forever ask that question, but adults no longer do in our day. It is not healthy, much less good business, to "get involved." Neighbors might give you the cold shoulder. Bank might foreclose your mortgage. You're apt to lose customers. And those Minutemen might aim their cross-hairs at your neck. Non-Believers are traitors.

Why did Sirhan shoot the Senator? Did he have a personal grudge against him? Nothing to that effect has come out or even been hinted at.

Did he consider Robert Kennedy a political foe? Nothing is known about Sirhan's political affiliations, if any, but ideological differences, in the US, do not run deep and it's unheard of for Democrats and Republicans to take potshots at each other out of political spite, as is customary abroad.

Anyway, what did Robert Kennedy stand for Sirhan did not like? The Senator was a staunch defender of civil rights, to which the young Arab immigrant could hardly object. He was a champion of the oppressed minorities, to which Sirhan belongs. And, although himself a rich man, Robert Kennedy did care for the poor. Was that the reason why Sirhan, the pauper, killed him?

From whichever angle you look at this murder, seeking a plausible motivation, it doesn't make sense. That's why they dragged in, from the outset, the most conspicuous red herring ever seen: the allegation that Sirhan fired at the Senator because he (the assassin) hated Israel so much and the victim on one or two occasions had put in a good word for the Jewish State (as who hasn't among political leaders in the United States?) I've dealt with this absurdity before and do not feel like going over it again.

And so the question remains, solid and inexplicable: Why did Sirhan kill Robert Kennedy? Is there any other conceivable answer than that he did it for money? He is, then, that lowest form of the human species, a paid assassin? There is no getting around it.

There are other disturbing whys and because they are troublesome they are simply ignored. If somebody did pay Sirhan to kill Robert Kennedy, why did he do so? The Senator had been prominent in public life for many years, he had made many enemies in the past, especially while he was Attorney-General, yet he had never been harmed. Now, as a respected, but hardly leading member of the Senate, Robert Kennedy was scarcely in a position to hurt his foes of yore. Why, then, was he killed at the most inoffensive stage of his political career?

The answer is obvious for all with eyes to see - but how many people have eyes? Robert Kennedy was murdered because he had become a presidential candidate. To the innocents at home, of course, such a statement inevitably prompts the retort: And Humphrey, McCarthy, Nixon, Rockefeller, Reagan - weren't they all presidential candidates? Why Robert Kennedy of all people?

Because he had scores to pay off, which the others did not. None of them had a brother who was assassinated because he was president. Robert Kennedy desperately wanted to become president so he could avenge his slain brother. And, by the same token, those who had taken the life of John F. Kennedy

(to be continued in No. 12)