

3 April 1967

Mr. Eliot Fremont-Smith
The New York Times
229 West 43 Street
New York, N.Y. 10036

Dear Mr. Fremont-Smith,

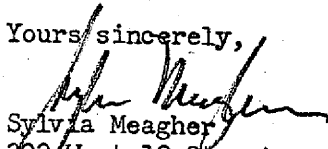
Your injunction notwithstanding, it is entirely possible to argue that William Manchester has not been diligent in his so-called "historical document."

It is scarcely "diligent" for the writer of a work of history to misrepresent repeatedly, as Manchester has done, simple facts, easily verifiable in the official record. Let me mention a few examples which come to mind, even without consulting Manchester's grandiose book.

(1) Manchester refers to the five-man Secret Service office in Dallas, when the testimony of the special-agent-in-charge indicates that it is a seven-man office. (2) He says that FBI agent Hosty learned on November 4, 1963 that Oswald was employed in the Depository, when both Hosty and Ruth Paine testified that the information was given him on November 1, 1963. (3) He asserts, in contravention of testimony, that Rowland, Fischer, and Edwards saw Lee Harvey Oswald in the window of the Depository building before the shooting. That is totally unfounded. They saw a man or men. Not one of the three witnesses ever identified Oswald as the man in the window. (4) He claims that Buell Wesley Frazier and Oswald together looked at and discussed a map of the motorcade route on the afternoon before the assassination. Frazier testified, on the contrary, that he at no time discussed the Presidential visit or the motorcade with Oswald or anyone else. (5) He suggests that an unnamed police officer performed artificial respiration on Oswald after he was shot and before the ambulance arrived, implying that the administration of artificial respiration was so dangerous to a victim of gunshot wounds as almost to eliminate any chance of recovery. Had he checked the official record, he would have found that in fact Dr. Bieberdorf, the police doctor on duty at the time, had attempted heart massage upon failing to detect a heartbeat.

Additional errors of this inexcusable kind easily could be documented. If Manchester has been grossly inaccurate and shockingly careless with respect to a body of verifiable data, one is compelled to view with utmost caution the larger body of assertions which he has failed to annotate and which are not verifiable. But the known misrepresentations seems sufficient, it seems to me, to invalidate your view that "history is served" by Manchester's epic for shopgirls.

Yours sincerely,


Sylvia Meagher
302 West 12 Street
New York, N.Y. 10014