

November 25, 1971

The Editor  
Op-Ed Page  
The New York Times  
New York 10036

Dear Sir:

I was extremely disappointed to see the article published on the op-ed page of November 22, 1971, "The Warren Commission Was Right," by David Belin, without any space given to the opposing point of view. Not only was Mr. Belin's article merely a watered down rehashing of the old arguments used in the Warren Report, it never addressed the many well documented critiques of the Report, factual and legitimate criticisms offered to refute exactly the arguments he offers. The arguments of the critics have not weakened nor have those of the Commission become more tenable in the time that the assassination has not been a popular controversy.

Since the refutations of Mr. Belin's points have been long available to the public, I will not repeat them here. I would like to address Mr. Belin's assurance that "truth was my only goal," for that was hardly the case as my research into and contact with him have demonstrated.

Mr. Belin wrote that he concentrated in "Area II" in his work for the Commission: "The determination of who was the assassin of President Kennedy." This, it should be pointed out, was not the original assignment. Mr. Belin's field of work was first called "Lee Harvey Oswald as the assassin of President Kennedy," and if one checks the original outlines of the Commission's work, it is apparent that before the investigation was begun, it was decided that Oswald was guilty. Furthermore, although he suggested a less revealing label for his work, there is no doubt that Mr. Belin presumed Oswald's guilt in accordance with his first instructions. He wrote a memorandum on January 30, 1964 (which can be found in the unpublished files of the Commission) in which he stated without qualification that Lee Oswald fired the assassination shots. The Commission's investigation had not begun at the time that memorandum was written.

Finally, for the past several months I have been engaged in extensive correspondence with Mr. Belin. I have presented him with several of the criticisms of his work which have been made public, plus others more obscure. This includes the persuasive case presented by Mrs. Sylvia Meagher that Mr. Belin suborned perjury in taking the testimony of one Commission witness. Mr. Belin has been unable to refute anything I have documented for him, other to assure me that he is convinced Oswald was guilty. That is hardly worth the ink with which it was written since Mr. Belin was convinced of Oswald's guilt before he began his investigation.

It is indeed unfortunate that lawyers such as Mr. Belin who are supposed to represent law and justice are in fact the foremost marchants of falsification, deceit and malfeasance. However, I fear it is more unfortunate that such people are given access to the media without opposing viewpoints presented.

Sincerely,

Howard Hoffman