

Hyattstown, Maryland 20734
January 23, 1967

Mr. Joseph A. Ball
Ball, Hunt and Hart
120 Linden Avenue
Long Beach, California 90802

Dear Mr. Ball:

"But I'm sure the scandal mongers who have been writing scurrileous books about the report will spread the word that there was something sinister about Ruby's death," he added sardonically.

The Long Beach lawyer denounced as "literary scavengers" the recent procession of authors of books challenging the commission's conclusions.

He named Mark Lane, Harold Weisberg, Edward Jay Epstein and Leon (sic) Sauvage as writers who had raised doubts about the findings on the basis of "no new evidence whatsoever" but through what he called distortion or disregard of data set forth in the Warren Report.

This is a direct quotation from the New York Times of January 4, 1967, the entire second, third and fourth paragraphs. It is exactly as I represented to you in my letter of January 12. It is not in accord with your letter of the 19th, which arrived today. If you did not say these things about me, or if you do not believe them, the course of honor demands a letter of rectification to the Times, a copy to me.

You are correct in saying, "I was not exactly complimentary to you," but that is not all. You intended a slander. No intent consistent with responsibility and reputable purposes is served by such language. I addressed myself to this in the last paragraph of my letter. In any event, it is wrong, a repetition of the kind of methods and thinking that made the Report the scandalous thing it is.

The word and behavior of "enemy" is yours, not mine. I did not single you out; you did me. I seek and I want no personal enemies in this matter, and if you have followed my personal appearances as closely as I think possible you know this, and know that I have not indulged in personalities or irresponsibilities to sell books, and have, on my own, foregone obvious possibilities along this line. There are among your colleagues those who have personal reason to know this. It is my hope, my intent, and the thrust of my work that no one of you be made a goat. Not all of your colleagues have behaved this way among themselves.

So your letter is not really responsive. It neither denies the accuracy of the quote attributed to you nor withdraws or apologizes for it, nor does it answer my challenges. Further, it is evasive in

other ways. For example, you say, "...and unfortunately the term 'literary scavengers' cannot be attributed to me. The remark was first used by Governor Connolly of Texas to describe the work of Mark Lane, and others." The Times uses this phrase in quotes, as coming from you. Governor Connolly's prior use did not require that you repeat it. Also, I am among these "others" to whom the distressed governor alluded.

I return to your first sentence. It is you who treated me as an enemy. I did ~~not~~ and have not treated you that way. When you alter the public record you made without inspiration from me, I will have reason to believe you mean what you say.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg