

Mr. Brian Myers, Nightline
ABC-TV
1717 DeSales St.,
Washington, D.C. 20036

12/20/91

Dear Mr. Myers,

I write to ask a favor of you rather than phoning and in the belief that the manner in which I make the request reduces the possibility that it will succeed for my own purposes. Having no reason to believe what what I say applies to you personally and having reason to believe that it does not I ask you not to take what I'll say personally.

While I am not certain I believe that I told you that since the first of my major ~~s~~urgeries more than a decade ago, despite the wealth of material you saw I have written no more books because ~~the~~ physical limitations resulting from post-surgical complications make it impossible for me to write with the responsibility ~~in~~ ^{the} use of these materials that my personal standards require. I think I told you that instead ~~I~~ I devote what time remains for me at 73 in trying to perfect the record for history of the great national tragedy about which I have brought more fact to light than anyone else.

Because you asked me no question ^{in answer} to which ~~I would have~~ I would have explained the thrust of ~~my~~ 28 years of work I did not tell you. It has not been the pursuit of any whodunit. It is I think and intend a major study of the functioning of the basic institutions of our society in those times of great ~~stress~~ ^{stress} and since then.

One of these basic institutions that failed then and since is the press, the major ~~of~~ media. Without its failings I believe that ~~the~~ nation today would be much better off than it is.

My own reporting began a little more than 60 years ago, when I was quite young. My belief in the function, the responsibility of the press in a society like ours has not changed. The ~~practises~~ ^{practices}, however, have changed ~~radically~~ ^{radically}, so radically that reporters of principle have little chance of surviving ^{when} ~~not~~ adhering to what is now demanded of them. I've known some who didn't.

Personal attention means nothing to me. I've declined to appear on network specials that were certainly ~~to~~ get great attention, even when I had books to promote, rather than risk compromising principle. In more recent years I've refused to appear on the currently popular tabloid versions of news programs ~~after~~ ^{after} my first experience with them with one exception, when I owed someone a favor.

For the ~~two~~ years since my open-heart surgery, in part because one of the consequences is a changed sleep pattern that gets me up early, no later than ¹³⁰7 a.m. the day you were here, I have not seen any TV later than the evening shows that for lack of a better description are referred to as "news." I had not planned to make an exception of last night's Nightline ^{but} my wife prepared an earlier supper so I could retire earlier and then wake me so I could ~~view~~ ^{view} it.

It was more than a great disappointment to me. It made me feel uncleaned, used.

This was an even greater disappointment because you were thoroughly professional and without exception all the questions you asked were designed to make possible an honest and informative show.

What was aired was the exact opposite. It pimped for that literary whore who is so overtly exploiting and commercializing the most significant of the political assassinations that did turn the world around. In this I was used as a fig leaf to cover the ugly nakedness of the show that was aired, that did serve to further mislead and deceive the people and as I see it to justify the failures of the official miscreants who failed us and failed to meet their official responsibilities.


I feel even more used because when each thing I now do I do at the cost of something that means something to me that as a result I will not be able to do the time and slight cost of what I prepared Nightline to do and to do with confidence in its accuracy and proof of accuracy was wasted. To refer to what Stone was asked as creampuffs is to praise how Nightline shilled for him. This resulted in what amounts to a promotion for the most indecent and knowing/dishonest of all the many commercializations and exploitations of the JFK assassination. To say I was disappointed is the undersate enormously.

This is hardly a normal introduction to the asking of a favor. It is an intended record for history, whether or not ever used in any study of this history. We are not Merlins and we cannot remember the future.

The favor I ask is I know a departure from practise but I nonetheless ask for cassettes of your entire, unedited interview. I do not ask for it for myself and I do not ask that it be sent to me. All the records you saw and many you did not see will be a permanent public archive at local Hood College. Some of these records are already there. So I ask that in return for my unpaid time and costs ABC please send the interview to Mr. Charles Suhn, librarian, Hood College, Frederick, Maryland 21701.

On the chance that you will show this letter to someone not familiar with what you took back and know very well that I can document fully I cite one illustration of both Stone's nonstop lying and what I regard as ABC's journalistic dishonesty. Stone knew that I have and make freely available a quarter of a million pages of official records I got by a series of FOIA suits. ABC not only did not use this when it had photographs of all those file cabinets holding those records, it let Stone lie again to your large audience in claiming that they are all withheld until at least 2039. In my long-ago day, this would not have been tolerated from the greenest cub.

Sincerely,



Harold Weisberg