

cc Hal Verb

20751

11/16/85

Mr. Harve Morgan  
KCBS  
San Francisco, Calif.

Dear Mr. Morgan,

It was kind of you or your producer to make a copy of Merriman Smith's piece for release Sunday available to Hal Verb, who sent me a copy. This, before it appeared, I was able to challenge Mr. Smith to arrange for a debate with me in the auditorium of the National Press club in which we could examine his article, my book, the work of the Commission, or any combination to his liking. I do not expect a reply. I do not, certainly, expect an acceptance, but would love it. Were the Pulitzer people to reward conspicuous insecurity, then, with the stiff competition it already faces in this field, would still have a good chance.

Smith is so wrong he doesn't even know where he was, one of the very few people to whom I have spoken or from whom I have heard who cannot say precisely where he was at that very instant. Smith's Sunday piece is self-destructive to those who know the fact. But if it is accurate, it indicts a vast number of people for perjury. Smith places himself at the underpass, from which he clearly heard three-no more and no less- shots from behind and hence the Depository. He actually was not yet on Elm Street, but was still on Houston, was not in advance of the Presidential car but at least five cars behind it in his earlier writing - the prize winner- he obviously places this at from five car lengths to 200 yards, a great difference. I can go on and on like this, with nothing but quotations of UPI-Merriman Smith vs. UPI-Merriman Smith. I hope you see program possibilities in it, and that we could do this by phone. He is quite wrong in his juvenile comment on my book and his subjuvenile selections for evaluation. It did rain, as UPI, AP and the Report (page 42, as I recall) say; and I was not wrong on the organization of the motorcade unless the sworn testimony of then-Mayor Cabell is wrong (7H478), for in it he places himself behind the then-vice president and his follow-up car. Cabell's testimony is indefinite, but this is what it seems to mean. The organization of the motorcade is discussed in the Report immediately after the above citation on the weather. But were these two things error, how can a responsible journalist meet more than his obligation to say "Thank you, Mr. President" (or justify what earns him the right to) when he selects such trivia from more than 110,000 or fact that to date are 100% unassailed? This is another of the unfortunately many sad reflections on just how this horrible miscarriage came to pass.

There is another program idea I would like to suggest to you. I have the official list of what was enshrined in the National Archive to preserve as part of our national heritage. It is almost entirely an incredible collection of trash, trivia and junk. It includes the President's clothing and the C-2768 rifle and about nothing else of even sensible curiosity value. Examples are used and unused envelopes, totalling about a dozen and six half exhibits; used and unused stationery and writing paper; used and unused Xmas, greeting and calling cards; an unused LIFE subscription blank. unused postal change-of-address forms; Erin's clippings on child care, cooking, embroidery, crocheting; her patterns (Simplicity); her sewing basket (with medal, religious and coin, Mexican); library cards, dictionaries; educational aids, including shorthand;

two paperback Ian Flemings; Vols 1 and 2 of "The Outline of History"; Oswald's library card and a miscellany of employment records and tax forms, some redundantly listed; Rith Paine's Minox camera; the cheap camera Oswald gave his niece in 1958; a "no admittance" sign, etc. These I recall from memory. I can read from the official list to you, complete with FBI exhibit numbers. I have written a lengthy piece on this. It has been read with interest by the managing editor of a major paper who has passed it on to their Sunday magazine. It is also in Europe, where I have an agent.

Paul Fanning of the Jerry Williams Show on WBBM, where they have aired me by phone, called me yesterday. I'm to broadcast for an hour tomorrow on this and possibly Smith or other things that might occur to them. Mr. Fanning thinks you might be interested, hence the suggestion.

It is not public knowledge although it is publicly available. I have used it only once, on the Jack McInerney Show on WCAU. His night producer, Maury Levy, tells me the phones rang about it for two days.

As Mr. Verb may have told you, I hope to be in California next month. I haven't the resources of a publishing house, although I am a successful publisher, with the asset of a remarkably successful book (and monstrous debts). So, being but one man and broke, I can move only when others make it possible. But I think Joe Dolan can tell you what I can do by phone, as can the others I mentioned. And this is not only interesting, it is news.

I hope I get to see you, to thank you for what you have done, and possibly to be on your show when I'm in California. In any event, I must in complete candor tell you that with the almost total abdication of the intellectuals and the printed press, it is the electronic media that has made possible the transmission to the people of the essential fact that is and must be the basis for decision-making in a society such as ours. Only an informed public can express itself. It is conspicuous, and I think and hope in history will be acknowledged and praised, that in the ultimate telling of the truth in the story of both the assassination and its investigation, it is you and programs like yours that have picked up the torch so shamefully dropped by the papers and the magazines.

For whatever it is worth to you, you have my deep thanks and sincere appreciation, as do your colleagues, so many unknown to me.

Respectfully,

Harold Weisberg