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Merriman Smith Decries Vilification of Johnson

NEW YORK, April 24 (UPI) —White House correspondent Merriman Smith said today that President Johnson has had to bear "some of the worst vilification — even obscenity — that I've seen or heard" in 25 years of covering Washington.

Smith addressed nearly 800 publishers and their wives at the annual United Press International subscribers' breakfast in New York.

"At the so-called peace demonstration in New York's Central Park the other day," Smith said, "there were grown men carrying signs which openly and plainly challenged the President's normalcy." Smith also expressed dismay at buttons which say "Lee Harvey Oswald, where are you now that we need you" and pamphlets and books which allege that Mr. Johnson engineered the death of President Kennedy.