

Sylvia McC.
New
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June 26, 1967

Mr. J.R. Wiggins, editor
The Washington Post
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Wiggins,

In October 1964 I offer the Washington Post a collaboration in which you could write my book on the Warren Report while I continued my researches. In April we discussed what the Post could and would do and what I would do to help it, the data I would provide or lead it to. We made a deal in May that you promptly dishonored. You, personally, promised to look into it, did, and offered me a column in which to reply. I did, making no reference to your journalistic dishonesty, not to embarrass you, and agreeing in advance that you could cut and edit the column of space you offered me. You did not do this, returning my contribution instead for me to cut to an arbitrarily shorter length. This I did. When a considerable length of time passed and you still did not keep your word, I released you from it.

When your book editor liked my first book and wanted to review it, you ordered him not to on the ground that on this subject no one knew enough to do an honest review, something I have not seen otherwise reflected in your columns. The rest is as it was obvious: you reviewed all the later and competitive books through book week, ignoring only the one by a local man, another new journalistic concept. Since then you have been consistent, printing every irresponsibility, every libel and slander you could get your hands on, as long as you could pretend innocence, pretend to hide behind another's skirts.

Merriman Smith. You would not print my letter, nor did you, while with great dishonor pretending otherwise, correct his error in fact. Of course, to do that you would have had to retract the entire piece. You could not do that, could you. How could the Post acknowledge it printed a fiction about the assassination by a man who won the Pulitzer Prize for his reporting of it while at the same time being the only man in the world who doesn't know where he was when he learned the President had been shot. How could you acknowledge he just invented things he said he saw, that he didn't know where he was in the motorcade or even what the weather was. Or is it that this is the kind of journalism you prefer, that your stockholders want you to practice?

Schiller, Roberts, Gayzer and Woody: There is no vilification, no national dishonor you will not print and advertise, and there is not one of these journalistic harlots who will face me, in person or in writing, not one who will confront the fact of his dishonor. Nor do you. As I first told you I repeat, this shameful abandonment of simple decency and journalistic honor, if that is the way you and the Post want to live, is making any defense of the Commission members and the position of the President himself impossible. I will be reminding you that this is what you, personally, have helped bring to pass. Then it will be too late. Then you can look back in dismay.

Until then, I hold a mirror for you. It does not lie.

Sincerely yours,