

Rt. 8, Frederick, Md. 21701  
5/31/75

Mr. Ben Bradlee, editor  
Washington Post  
1150 15 St., NW  
Wash., D.C. 20005

Dear Mr. Bradlee,

I hope you will take the time to read the enclosed copy of my today's letter to David Martin, especially the references to the Post.

I read his story before breakfast. Since then I've read another Post story, to which I'll refer not in criticism but as illustrative of the real problems the press, which is confronted with deadlines of which officials are aware, has to contend with.

Thursday's Post contains another illustration of how the press can be used for official purposes with the press innocent and the reporting scrupulously accurate. I do think that if the Post were not hung up on me it might have occurred to someone on Lawrence Meyer's desk to ask me questions I also think are obvious about that story, "Officials Complain of Information Act Demands."

Winning five FOIA suits one way or another, with one being part of the legislative history of the amending and specifically cited in the debates; winning countless others outside of court; and being the writer if not the person who has used this law more than any other ought to qualify me as an expert.

When I realized that in all innocence the Post was being used - you can't be expert on everything - because I start the day early I dashed off a 1,200-1,500 draft of an opinion article going into the other side before breakfast. I laid it aside until your working day starts rather than taking the time and cost of getting it retyped. (I am as for more than 11 years I have been without income of subsidy.) Then I phoned Geyelin. I could not get through. The second woman to whom I spoke was a real stonewall. I explained to her that I did not want to take the time to retype this piece if there was not the possibility that Geyelin would consider it. I told her it was not a letter to the editor, that I knew it to be impossible to consider everything, that no editor could commit himself to any article without reading it, and that all I wanted to know is whether he would consider the piece without any commitment to use it. Why should I waste the time if as is his right Geyelin feels he wants no editorial article on FOIA? And you are not unaware of other thoughts I could have had. But all I could get was a broken record, "Mr. Geyelin considers everything." anybody who has spent a day in any newspaper knows better. It simply is impossible.

No reporter, no matter how good - and I believe Martin and George Gardner are good, much better than average good reporters - can know or remember everything. So it is not personal criticism of them or of their editors to note a few questions their today's stories raise. With Martin's central is when JFK first learned of Russian missiles in Cuba. I don't know but I do know the official stories of the past: when McGeorge Bundy awakened him with the news two months after the date in Martin's story. I think it was 10/15/62. There is a date question with Gardner's close, "... the only plot devised against Castro in the 1959-63 period." CIA ones in 1965 have been reported. Policy, at least JFK's, changed in October 1962. Johnson has been quoted widely as lamenting a Murder, Inc., we operated in the Caribbean.

Gardner's unidentified sources told him that "cover's reason for writing Bobby was "because he feared that any CIA-Mafia deals could compromise government investigations and prosecutions of organized crime cases."

I have an extensive collection of Hoover's letters. In a majority of them self-serving is obvious. He was a master at this, at filing and at semantics. The nature of the Hoover-Kennedy relationship is not secret. Oft-reported accounts have it that one of Bobby's real problems with Hoover was getting him to make any real effort against organized crime.

In filing the thousands of pages of FBI material I have obtained\* there are more than 2,000 pages I have not yet had time to read - I have never had the need to establish a file on what the FBI knew about plots against Castro.

The graf from which I've quoted begins, "Hoover was apparently unaware of any (emph. added) plot to assassinate Castro," sources said...."

If I can't recall any proof I have to the contrary I suspect that somewhere I do have it.

Among those "indigenous (Cuban) organizations trying to do him [Castro] in" the source referred to Hoover had his own informant. There was also his responsibilities under the Neutrality Act. I know of FBI raids where there was reason to believe assassination of Castro could have been an objective of those raided. I have published a little on this. Come to think of it, there was also, not just FBI, awareness of an assassination plot. I report it in Whitewash (1), pp. 152ff. From the existing records Hoover delayed investigating this until the Warren Commission directed him to nine months or so later. It is a non-investigation but confirmatory. This is in the second book and if you want them you can have those reports. I have them. I also have not less than five taped interviews with two of those Hoover said were involved, if you want them. Dubious types, but one told me he had been offered \$50,000 to kill JFK. And this is not in the FBI reports. (Later two others told me of plots against Duvalier in which the FBI had no interest. I offer them the tape of the interview through Internal Security Division.)

I repeat this is not criticism of the Post, Gardner or his desk. I do not equate it with the judgement reflected in the Post refusal to print a word about that 1/22/64 transcript I wish you would read personally. Or with the attitude I encountered Thursday with Goyalin's office.

My concerns are about the selective abandonment of traditional standards of news writing and judgements, about the facility with which officials can manipulate what appears and does not appear, and what this can mean to the country, particularly in what I regard as a crucial and dangerous period.

Currently there seems to be no end to them and I can't remember a time, even during the Warren Commission period, when they were as frequent and consistent. I was told yesterday that the Boston Globe had a story dating the ~~activation~~ activation analyses for which I'm suing and have in part confirms the official solution to the JFK material. When I offered what I had already obtained to UPI and the Post without interest, I left an unanswered message at the Globe's Washington office. They also wrote this story without speaking to me. I think I also qualify as an obvious expert on this having made the study that underlies the case I took to the Supreme Court and being the current litigant. Without casting aspersions at the Globe, where I know nobody, I offer the opinion that this exemplifies bad journalism and represents a probable solicitation to being used. The simplest proof is that the required NAA tests simply were never made. I tell you this based on Kelley's letter in this suit of 5/10/75 and the papers I have been given under it. To date, that is, because I've proven in court that they swore falsely in saying they have given me all, as Kelley also says in this letter. (I've already offered and offer the Post copies. ~~apix~~ If you want to send this to the ~~Washington~~ Globe, where I have no contacts or even names, please do.)

If I were not sincerely worried about the potential of all of this I'd not be taking this time. I hope you will find enough time to think about it.

Sincerely,

Harold Matshner

Rt. 8, Frederick, Md. 21701

5/31/75

Mr. David Martin  
Associated Press  
1300 Conn. Ave., NW  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Martin,

Among those who have written criticism about the Warren Report I am, in several major respects, a minority of one.

My approach and attitude are unique, as a reading of the introduction to my first book, *Whitewash, the Report on the Warren Report*, will show. (AP had it.) Since then I have never done any theorizing about who killed JFK.

I am not anti-government, as your own files under Peace Corps will show. At the same time I know from the inside how government works, ours and others.

I was an investigative reporter when it meant something more than cultivating leaks. I was an investigator for the Senate and an analyst in intelligence. These experiences influence how I think and work.

Had it not been for what I regarded as the evil doctrine of Edward Epstein's and Mark Lane's books, which followed my first, all of the work I've done since then would have been different.

Before I was able to print my first book I had researched one that I have not since had time to write. I call it *Tiger to Hide: the Untold Story of the Cuba Missile Crisis*. (The story I will tell remains largely untold ten years after that research was completed.)

As it appears in today's Post under the head "Plan to Slay Castro Tied to JFK's Orders," your story crosses into that work.

After reading it I tell you what I told you yesterday: you (and all the press) are being used.

Your (meaning all reporters') sources are not dealing with you honestly. What I read to you that you had not been told of that Robert Kennedy letter is but one of many examples. What I read to you about Coleman and Glawson and what I referred you to and offered you is another example. I recall no single story in what amounts to a campaign I saw clearly enough early this year to start keeping files on it of which this is not true.

The repetition of what the Warren Commission and its executive-branch allies (perhaps the order should be reversed because J. Edgar Hoover was the leader) did with and to the press is clear. That the press also has not learned its lesson is, too. (I put it this way because I do not assume dishonest intent by reporters or their editors.)

To me your today's story illustrates the wisdom of the Post's two-source rule in its Watergate handling. Lansdale's "I was working for the highest authority in the land" might remind you of Watergate, too.

If his "someone much more intimate" with JFK than McGeorge Bundy turns out to be dead and unable to give a different account I'll not be surprised. My candidate is one whose partisan I never was.

I have no reluctance risking my reputation as a prophet and analyst in forecasting where all this will lead and the essence of what it will say and why.

The Rockefeller Commission will find that the CIA had indeed done all these things already reported (and none other of consequence). It will say these things ought never be done and that henceforth the CIA will not.

A Warren Commission parallel is Marina Oswald, their first "witness" when she was a witness to nothing. She was to testify to directly opposite all of substance she had already said. So, she said simply up to now I've been a liar but from now on I'll not lie. Whereupon she began to lie.

The coming report will also find that in all cases those CIA excesses were the direct responsibility of Presidents and those acting for them, Read mostly Democrats.

especially Kennedys.

It will strike a fine judicial balance, saying that the CIA has done very well by the nation also and is indispensable to national security. And that it is not guilty of Original Sin, witness a long series of criticisms the refutation of which seems to have caused the only actual investigation by and for this Commission. None of this was necessary. It is an ~~even~~ enormous overkill operation the intent of which is obvious. It is a duplication of official work done long ago, mostly with the so-called "tramp" pictures and the JFK autopsy, both of which will be seriously misused. By the Commission as by the irresponsible and self-promoters they will cite, none an authentic expert on the subject.

Nobody in the press had any doubts about what kind of Commission this would be when its membership was announced. Comments were few and soon dropped.

More of a touchstone to me, however, is that nobody in the press asked me a single question ~~of~~ about David Belin. His is one of the rottest records on the Warren Commission, quite unlike the piety of his faithfully reported self-serving declarations. And no single reporter seems to have asked him what refighting the Warren Report has to do with investigating the CIA. All editors seemed to be content to be used for his propaganda purposes, uncritically.

With the faking of evidence and the suppression of evidence for which David Belin is personally responsible it would have been impossible for the Warren Report as written to have appeared. Take me literally on these charges and take me up on it if you have doubts. I have outlined a large piece on this but I doubt there will be any interest.

It is not only because he is President and will run again that Ford has a great stake in the Rockefeller Report and what without doubt it will say. He personally did what no other member of the Commission or its staff did. You and I would have been charged with criminal activity for part of it. He first put a former campaign manager (now in the White House, John/ Ed. Stiles) on the public payroll to be his ghost. He then took a TOP SECRET transcript and sold it for profit. It took me from 1967 until last year to get that transcript, ultimately by the FOIA law in a suit entirely unreported although I proved official perjury in it. I also believe it to be the first time the claim to "national security" was overturned in court. If this is true, naturally there was less news in that suit. Not content with this he then edited this transcript and was careful to represent that he had made no changes in it. There is a word-by-word comparison in my Whitewash IV:TOP SECRET JFK Assassination Transcript. He omitted, among other things, every one of the sensational criticisms of the CIA and FBI by most of the members, particularly Allen Dulles. Unprecedented criticisms especially relevant today. Were this not enough he then lied about all of this in his confirmation hearings. For mortals, the lie being under oath and material, this would be perjury. If my recollection is correct he lied later insaying he does not know if there is an FBI file on him. He personally contrived one in a way I think you'd be as ashamed as I to have even thought of. I reported it partly in facsimile in my second book.

The combination of the Ford/Belin/ Republican Commission and the focus of the management of the news on the Kennedys and Democrats, particularly the irrelevant Warren Report, leaves little doubt in my mind of the improper and ulterior purposes being served and for which the press is letting itself be used.

Can it really be that no reporter sees nothing in the repeated allegations that the executive agencies (Democrat controlled again) withheld essential evidence from Ford's earlier Commission? Not only is it obvious that nothing could have been withheld from the Commission but more, in none of the cited cases was the Commission unaware. In the first of these I made public from the Commission's own files the documents that proved the Commission had what allegedly had been withheld. I offered you the most recent documented one, the Mozanko papers. (Inquiry into the reasons for the declassification of them when they never qualified for classification, into why they were not declassified in the many mandatory reviews, and into the dates of declassification, might make an interesting story. The Archives has not answered my questions on this. This is also a Coleman-Slawson story.)

How witting Ford was to all of this is apparent in the two transcripts I just released. One is in Whitewash IV. I gave Don Rothberg the other. I encourage you to read them for yourself.

In them you will also find the beginning of this anti-Kennedy campaign. One form is the actuality, that the Commission had before it began its work what Bobby Kennedy is alleged to have withheld from it.

The false allegations that these executive agencies withheld the essential from the Warren/Ford Commission is the one way Ford can be exculpated.

When the old boys let their hair down it was indeed something. Thus as what they expected to be perpetual secrecy Russell, who qualified as an expert, said the CIA would twist anything, a lesson today's reporters might learn. And their editors. And when John McGloy told his fellow members that Isaac Don Levine, paid by a major publication, had secret access to Marina, was programming her to allege that Oswald was a Russian agent, they agreed this would be disastrous and Dulles offered to use his personal friendship to cut that off. With this in mind read Rothberg's story of the 1/22/64 executive session, ~~which~~ on conspiracy. Ford was present and participated, wittingly.

I take this time in the hope it may lead the AP to treat this story in the traditional way, that all of you will, for example, be as skeptical as you are with, say, what I represent.

As I was yesterday I will always be available when there is a chance I can be of help. There is nobody who has done the work I have. To date there has been no aspect of this multi-faceted story on which I have not worked. ~~and~~ have relevant files of official documents all once withheld.

None of the ~~fact~~ on the other side, say Solin's personal record on the Warren Commission or Ford's, is news, of course. But if the current concept of news ever reverts to the traditional one, I will be available.

Please do not take this either personally or as referring to AP only. I gave that 1/22/64 transcript away - xeroxes - 4/25/75 in New York City. A Post reporter got one and discussed it with me. A Times reporter was there. When these papers carried nothing I twice phoned the star. When AP's accurate and fair story was on the wire none of these three papers carried a word. By any normal standard it was news, often front page and away from Washington continues the lead story.

These are the three papers seen by most legislators.

Two people spoke to the Post national desk and reported what they were told to me by phone. One was told the person to whom he spoke didn't know why the story was not carried but assumed it was a decision made higher up. The second was told, in effect, that one transcript is all transcripts, there was no news to the Post because it had reported my printing of the 1/27/64 transcript, and assumedly that is why the entirely different story about an entirely different transcript was not used.

I think it not inappropriate for me to close as Dulles ended that 1/22/64 meeting, with words still not reported in the press: "I think this record ought to be destroyed." Orwell didn't say it better.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg