

Rt. 8, Frederick, Md. 21701

5/4/75

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

Dear King Canute,

The water is up to your balls but there you are, in the Post and on coast-to-coast TV, pretending to be astride Olympus.

Of the many current great national tragedies few have or can have more dire consequences than the major media constituting themselves arms of government. On some subjects this is without significant deviation true. Without this complete abdication of the traditional and proper function and attitude of the press, I do believe it can be argued that most of the trauma of modern times would have been avoided.

At some point you personally and the Post will no longer be able to avoid its and your personal record on both the JFK assassination (and less the others) and, given the power and influence of the Post, the consequences. Horrible consequences.

What touches this off is that disgusting insult to a high-school intelligence obscenely headed "The Oswald Evidence" on today's ed page. What makes it all the more indecent and dishonest is the record of the Post on just this subject during a single week. Plus your comments in promoting your book.

"Evidence" lies in Priscilla McMillan's "understanding" of Lee Harvey/ Oswald's "personality?" You not only said it, you dredged other papers to reprint it. It is a "waste" of time to seek "hard facts" over this "expert's" personal nightmares? Would there had been this "predeflection," but there wasn't. And when it was and remains impossible to place the accused at the scene of the crime or to connect him with it by any "hard" evidence, the Post tells its readers, "it was probably the strongest case ever assembled against a single individual." What is so important that you have to comb other papers for it? "...that time of day a certain photograph was taken or how long a particular bus ride might ~~take~~ take at a given hour of day of/night."

Yesterday, in order to make an effort to frustrate more of the whoring around and commercialization that has tainted both sides in the assassinations controversy I offered the Post, exclusively, the results of a Freedom of Information suit that is unique and is only part of an enormous, unpaid effort of a decade. I mean on this one aspect alone. By any national standard this is a major story. It is official, it is definitive, it is the result of court action (unreported by the Post as recently as yesterday), and it is a story that after Watergate ought shock decency. The refusal of your national desk (which I do hope is reconsidering) was couched in words that demean you and the Post.

One of the elements that makes this case (C.A. 226-75) unique is that Congress, in effect, passed a law ordering the FBI to deliver this suppressed evidence to me after the Supreme Court supported the official mendacity also suppressed by the Post. You even found this unusual position by the Congress (5/30/74) not worthy of mention.

A week ago I gave the Post a copy of a long-suppressed Warren Commission executive session of 1/22/64, which was well before it began its so-called investigation. That session concludes with the Orwellian statement by Allen Dulles, agreed to by the others including our unelected President, "I think this record ought to be destroyed."

Not news, especially when the controversy has flared up again?

Not news when what it follows is full recognition, articulated, that Hoover and the FBI had made any real investigation of the assassination of your friend impossible:

"They would like to have us fold up and quit. ...This closes the case, you see. Don't you see? [Boggs]. Yes, I see that [Dulles]. They found the man. There is nothing more to do. The Commission supports their conclusions, and we can go home, and that is the end of it."

The "this" is not unknown to you. I put a copy of part in your hand, personally, almost a decade ago. It began what with no shame you described on TV as this massive investigation of the Post's. It was Hoover's "solution" to the crime, his so-called definitive "report" of five volumes which he personally leaked before it could reach the Commission. (You people are great with leaks and being uncritical about accepting them but as investigators you couldn't find public hair in an overworked and under-cleaned whorehouse.) How, to your personal knowledge, did Hoover "solve" this crime? By eliminating one of the President's wounds and a shot known to have been fired, the so-called "missed" shot.

With this background I challenge you, personally, to confront the evidence on that "missed" shot alone that the Post rejected yesterday and to tell me that it is not newsworthy, that it is not the most positive proof of deliberate FBI fakery; or that it was right and proper for the Commission to ignore it.

Quite aside from evidentiary content, I would like you, personally, to tell me that it is not news when I offer the Post over Clarence Kelley's signature the proof that the required scientific tests were not made and that of all these tests there were no compiled results. Remember, this was not a common mugging. This was the FBI's "investigation" of the assassination of a President and a Presidential Commission's acceptance of it.

There now appears to be a reasonable prospect that the official mythology is going to fall apart. How this happens can be crucial to the nation. How it happens and when it happens will be influenced if not controlled by what the press does and does not do, what it suppresses by resort to phoney journalistic concepts and standards.

I do, really sincerely, hope that you come to feel the rising water and that you recognize it for what it is, the overflow of the sewers. It may already be too late for you to avoid a time when the record will trouble you sorely. I would lament the day when Bradley ~~mean~~ would mean to "friend" what Hobson means to "choice," too.

In all interests I encourage you to believe that my work rests on the most solid factual foundation. It is enormous, it is careful, and there has never been a single serious challenge to any of the million printed words of it. Ask any Post reporter who has ever dealt with me on anything if I have ever given him a bum steer or he has ever found factual inaccuracy in anything he has checked.

In your interest I hope you can rise above the man who ordered Geoffrey Wolff not to review my first book, the first on the subject, with a hoked-up dodge and then proceeded to review by syndication every following book with a corrupt doctrine. If you do not there will be this albatross, forever more.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

The Oswald Evidence

Why, after more than a decade, do so many Americans still have doubts about the assassination of President Kennedy? Why is it hard for so many of us to lay this event to rest?

For the doubts, and the doubters, are there. They are vocal—and they are listened to. In the first days of April alone, three major national publications carried articles featuring doubts about the Kennedy assassination. A conference about these questions was held recently at Boston University and six members of the House of Representatives, led by Rep. Henry Gonzales (D-Texas), are pressing for a new investigation.

I have been researching the assassination for several years and I believe that the Warren Commission, which was set up by President Johnson immediately after the assassination to try to ascertain the truth, not only was well motivated but it also reached the right conclusions. The commission found that Lee Harvey Oswald had killed the President, had done so alone and that there had been no conspiracy. Going on the "hard" evidence alone, it was probably the strongest case ever assembled against a single individual.

But the commission's report has shortcomings. I find them mostly in the area of Oswald's motivation. Because of the shortage of time (the commission finished in 10 months), the profusion of false leads that it wasted precious weeks tracking down, and a predilection on the part of the commissioners for "hard" facts over evidence that might have shed light on Oswald's complex personality, the report failed to flesh out a convincing portrait of Lee Harvey Oswald as a living, breathing human being who, in his eyes anyhow, might have had cause to kill the President.

Thus a few witnesses were not questioned who ought to have been. Crucial witnesses who knew Oswald well were wasted—because they were questioned ineptly. The final 11 volumes of the commission's 26 volumes of supporting evidence are so atrociously organized that they are hard for anyone to use and easy for some to distort.

Because of my interest in motive, I am eager to track down as many as I can of Oswald's movements, even his thoughts, during the year and a half before the assassination. Sometimes I need to know what time of day a certain photograph was taken or how long

Mrs. McMillan is completing a biography of Marina and Lee Harvey Oswald. This article first appeared in the Christian Science Monitor.

a particular bus ride might take at a given hour of day or night. With difficulty, I have managed to extract guesses at least from the very back volumes of the report, but nowhere have I found critical newspaper clippings of April 1963, announcing the return to Dallas of Maj. Gen. Edwin A. Walker, whom Oswald attempted to shoot on April 10. Yet evidence of this kind can shed light, not on the Walker attempt alone, but on Kennedy's assassination.

The commission's decision to sequester even the smallest bit of autopsy evidence was a catastrophic mistake. Publication of all the material, especially photographs of the head wounds, would have hurt everyone's sensibilities, but it would have prevented, for all time, the now obsessive questions as to the direction of the final shot.

Now that doubts have been sown and questions are alive on every side, what can be done to set the doubts to rest?

I favor any honest investigation that stands a chance of bringing new facts to light or even ventilating old ones, since we have today a new generation, of college age and younger, that has never been exposed to the hard facts that at first made the Warren report so persuasive.

But I believe doubts whether Oswald was a secret agent will never be set to rest. No intelligence agency is going to step forward and say it hired him. It would be a miracle if evidence of this nature should be unearthed. I feel certain that Oswald was not and could not have been anybody's agent. But most of my evidence is negative. It lies in understanding his personality.

Lastly, I believe that the killing of a President, or a king or father, is the hardest of all crimes for men to deal with. As Freud pointed out, it is this crime that stirs the deepest guilt and anxiety. A hundred years after the fact, questions still stir about the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. For the doubts about this one crime, the crime of parricide, lie deep as human nature itself. No matter what steps are taken, what investigation may be authorized or what autopsy material made public, I suspect that the doubts about President Kennedy's murder are going to be with us forever.