5/20/72

Mr. Ben Bradlee, Executive Editor
The Washington Post
1150 15 St., NW
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Mr. Bradlee,

It is kind of you to take the time from your many obligations to answer. I do not say "respond" because you did not respond, and I accept that as a kind of response. Instead you seek to defend, and I elect to take that as a healthy sign. If you did not have a doubt you do not articulate, I don't think you would. You, personally, have more in this than you now understand. Some time ago, when I realized it, I tried to communicate it to you through Larry, who can be brilliantly caustic without too much provocation. I chose not to fight about it and accepted the arrogance. It is your later self-concept that was at issue, not mine of Larry's.

I do not really believe your precise words, "I followed your questioning of the Warren Commission more closely than you thought." I don't think you have really "followed" it at all. You may think you have, but it can't be much better than through what you printed by syndication or in some other second-hand way. Regardless of what you think of my work, it has stood some remarkable tests and today I'll subject my very earliest to any reasonable test you select. Or have you forgotten how all this started, with Larry and Dan Kurzman taking a single sheet of question I had written out to Howard Willens and coming back entirely unsatisfied on any single point?

I can speak for none of the others you have in mind who "confuse and disrupt" you. Depending on how you mean "disrupt", that can be good. I think the entire subject should disrupt concerned people. If I did not consider you one I'd not waste time in writing. If there is anything I have said or written that confuses you, I will face any confrontation you would like to resolve the confusion. Including Lattimer. Joe Borkin tried it some years ago, when he was National Press Club speakers'-bureau chairman. He couldn't get anyone to do it. Nobody. Ask him. I am not bragging. If you think I am, try to arrange anything along this line with any expert you want on the other side, in public or in private. You are an important man. I regard this as an important subject, in many ways. I don't think you should suffer any confusion. As a matter of fact, the one thing I placed in your hand in the spring of 1966 is something you have not concerned youself with, how the FBI could make its definitive report on the assassination of a President without accounting for his known wounds. But I am far past that kind of thing in my investigations and research.

Unless Lattimer's Resident and Staff Physician piece is unlike his other writing, and I can't say because while promising me a copy, he has not provided it, you do your critical faculties no credit in your comment on him. His earlier work is a scientific fraud and only those seeking copouts would fail to detect it. If you want chapter and verse, please ask. It is further disreputable in the complete fabrication of sources. He is a radical-right "thinker" who invents what is congenial to his preconceptions. Please take me literally on this and I again invite challenge. I can put his own letter in your hand admitting the fabrication. But to refer again to his first work, if you do not of your own knowledge understand the stipulations of the Geneva convention on "humanitarian" warfare, certainly your rather better than average staff can come up with it. Understanding the requirements imposed on military ammunition, then ask the relevance of a laboratory

slicing - and with fine lab equipment yet - of the core of a military round when the question allegedly addressed is the bullet's behavior on the striking of bone. Or whether the fact that in the lab ultra-thin slices can be made has anything to do with the weight of actual fragments allegedly shed. Or their dimensions as compared with their alleged source. I am likewise familiar with Lattimer's comments on seeing what he alone had offered to him, despite his admitted disqualification (I have it on tape) under the contract by which it was hidden. I give you a simple challenge: get your library to give you Fred Graham's exclusive on it, read the third graph, and ask yourself if it is at all possible. You don't need anything more than Lattimer to disprove him, his competence, his honesty or, if you have the whole thing without the advertised product, his purpose. He says that looking at the pictures and X-rays proves who fired what shots. That neither your paper nor any other of which I know asked any question about this does not confuse or disrupt me. I have come to expect such things. I do hope the day will come when you cannot.

You say you wonder what I am really driving at. In simplified form, subject to expansion should you want it, the integrity of a system of society. It is neither more complicated nor sinister. If your roots came from where mine do, you might understand it better. I am the first of my family born in this country, on both sides.

In your own way, I am confident you have a similar feeling. The difference is that your feelings and sophistication are selective. Lattimer is an example. He says what you find congenial and you lose you critical faculties, a-typical for any newspaperman, more so for an experienced editor.

There is a simple manner in which we can resolve some of this. To use your own words, it should not confuse you. It should eliminate most if not all the confusion. I do not think it will not dispute you. I believe it will, and it should. I have but a single condition: complete and total confidentiality. I will put in your hands official documents that were withheld from the Warren Commission itself. Before I go further, I ask you to consider what I am saying if I say anything was withheld from the Warren Commission. I did not steal them. I have a chain of covering letters. It took me years to locate and then obtain them. This can take as little of 3 to 5 minutes of your time, depending on your interest. If this sample interest you, I have more. I have in mind only enough to end your confusion. I neither ask nor want publicity, quite the opposite. If you then want to go further, I will take the time. And whatever I tell you I will back up with proof that is at least reasonable (I think it will in every case be beyond rational questioning). In the end, if not now, I think that aside from the responsibilities of your position, you have an unrecognized personal stake in this. If I have no hope of getting it printed, it is a matter I have found it necessary to address in my writing, and that I have done. I have no reluctance in showing it to you, should that interest you. It may be no more than an historical record. And it is not recent writing.

I understand there can be nothing personal in this for me. I expect nothing. The record is clear enough. I remind you of a bit: an unreported summary judgement against the Department of Justice (when did your paper last report one?); confiscation of court records by the government; certification by the Department of Justice that the Acting Attorney General is a liar, and this in the federal court of appeals. If none of these things is news to your paper, do I need anything spelled out?

On the other side, I am without income and deep in debt. I can't make the 50 mile trip to Washington without increasing my debt. But I ask and expect nothing. Except preservation of my confidence. I would like to lay to rest two words in your letter, "confusion" as applied to you and "divisive" as applied to me. Your paper is too important in our society for me not to want to attempt this, and you are too important in your paper.

Whether or not you accept, I would appreciate a copy of this latest Lattimer. And I will, if you accept, go to Washington any time of the day or night, at your convenience.

Sincerely, Harold Weisberg