

July 1, 1967

Mr. Richard Salant
President, CBS News
524 West 57th Street
New York, New York

Dear Mr. Salant:

Having had no reply to my letter of a week ago, I enclose copy of my tribute to Les Midgley, acknowledging his unequalled accomplishment in your four-part series on the Warren Report.

It is with the utmost sincerity that I confess indebtedness. You have, indeed, helped bring about public understanding of this multiple tragedy, more, I suspect, than you intended or realize.

I now know what is meant by Salanted news. This is a new CBS specialty.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

Enc.

July 1, 1967

Mr. Les Midgley
CBS News
524 West 57th Street
New York, New York

Dear Mr. Midgley:

How flattering it is that after more than a year you recall so vividly what I first brought to light in WHITEWASH: THE REPORT ON THE WARREN REPORT, a copy of the limited edition of which you then read, and how wonderful that you incorporate so much of it in your series of "specials". They are, indeed, very special! It is further thoughtful of you that you do not embarrass me with credit before your vast and well-advertised audience. This, of course, touches me deeply.

How truly subtle your indulgence of my modesty and humility, as so often reflected throughout your four shows, where you consistently raise points that I first raised, attributing them to others or to no one - I think this is true in every accurate case - and reach in the name of CBS only those critical conclusions you read in my work. There are several particularly delicate illustrations of this. For example, that part in which you begin mention of the speed of the Zapruder camera by saying, "one critic says". This is something I have never before been called, "one critic". It is cute.

It is a really imaginative touch to pretend to be addressing the reality that the Zapruder camera exposed film at 24 fps by timing other cameras, not his, at 18 fps. Ah, the wonder, the true marvel, of modern electronic journalism!

It was also really clever of you to keep secret from your audience that all of what you pictured Dr. Alvarez as believing, saying and proving you read first on page 47 of the private printing of WHITEWASH, which reads: "Beginning with Frame 190, this film suddenly becomes fuzzy." I am not a pretty man; Dr. Alvarez is. How decent of you to save me this embarrassment!

One part of this does trouble me, however. It is not affirmation of my discovery, that Zapruder reacted to hearing a shot by Frame 190, for that I welcome. It is that I seem to remember about a half-dozen identical cases from his film, and I do not recall CBS saying that Zapruder, by this proof, seems to have established a half-dozen shots. Do you really think it is still important to keep this secret from the people? I know your treatment of Arlen Specter, who accounts for three shots without explaining the blood of poor bleeding James Tague, is consistent with this, that he and you made no mention of the "missed" bullet recorded in blood and police radio logs and

Mr. Midgley - 2

records. I guess, especially because I had always thought Specter wrote that part of the Report, this is what might be called a policy determination, and from it, in the absence of comment from you, I will take an answer to the Zapruder film's fuzziness and the number of shots it reflects.

It appears that my comprehension is limited, so I ask you for help. You quite accurately say that the Commission never tested a single bullet in the spectacular career of remaining undeformed, unmuti- lated and virtually intact while inflicting seven non-fatal injuries on both men, although striking bone on at least two occasions. I recognize this language and this problem: I first raised it, as you know from your careful reading of my work (thanks for not mentioning this on the air). I caught the part where you said you had a hunk of masonite to represent the bone in the governor's wrist (what a nice touch, reminiscent as it is of the joys of my childhood). What I did not hear or see is that you thought it desirable to have any masonite in the gelatin that, again as in my childhood, I know repre- sents the chest. Did you just forget to mention this, did I miss it, or did you think it might work out better that way?

Aside from my secret pride in having written the first book to bring this out in just this way (there is now also an excellent monograph, "The Bastard Bullet," by Ray Marcus) and the only one to date to weave together all the evidence bearing on it (your thoughtfulness in sparing me notoriety on this point I hereby acknowledge), I truly do want to understand this, to comprehend exactly what you did say. It would be quite helpful to this if you could send me a Xeroxed copy of the "scientific" test and a picture of the bullet at the end of its career. I would like to see for myself that it is undeformed, unmuti- lated and intact, how wrong the FBI's expert Frazier was in testifying that had the real bullet struck coarse cloth or leather it would have been marked, how corrupt those tests at Aberdeen were when their bullets always managed to get mangled by their gelatin and stuff.

I know you will rush this report and picture to me, if for no other reason because of your criticism of LIFE for not allowing you to show the Zapruder film, especially because you did not pay more than \$25,000 for the bullet and, of course, because you were, to my de- light, not at all reluctant to ask for copies of my own original work.

If I may digress for a moment, I say nothing of the Lovelady picture you took, nothing of the man-in-the-doorway picture, nothing of Mary Dorman not being called as a witness when she told the FBI she took pictures of the assassination from the fourth floor of the TBBB, nothing of her pictures being in neither the evidence nor the secret files, nothing of Mrs. Arnold having seen Oswald on the first floor at 12:25, hence eliminating him as an assassin. I know you wanted these things, else you would not have asked for them. What I do not understand is why, having asked for them, you did not use them. Is

Mr. Midgley - 3

it that you think the people do not understand such simple evidence, involving as it does the integrity of the FBI and the investigation, because it is not as complicated as "science", not as pictorial as a big black silhouette around a white target on a straight track (why didn't the assassins think to surround the President with black so he would show up better in the glare of the sun - they'd not have missed a single shot if they could have arranged that!), not as straightforward as Eric Sevareid saying everybody is nuts except him and Comager and some of CBS?

It is, in the light of a recent phone call I had from Mrs. Lovelady, disappointing to me that you did not use her Billy's picture. She told me many interesting things, as certainly she did you. The pictorial representation would have excited me. She did not tell me that you used Ike Altgens, his Nikkorex and his 105-mm. lens. She did allege, however, that the FBI never asked him what shirt he wore to the assassination, and that he was not wearing that shirt when the FBI photographed him November 29, 1964. She said the shirt he ~~wore~~ that day, in which we all have such great interest, is a black-and-red check with white flecks, that she had carefully put it away, and that he had since then worn it but once (you clever dog, to get him in that checked shirt!).

My problem here is that I cannot see two-inch checks in the Altgens picture. Would you be kind enough to let me see yours?

There are many wonderful silent tributes to me throughout your historic production, the more appreciated because you do not attribute them to me, keeping this a precious secret between the two of us. There are numerous other discoveries - or should I call them inventions - that I found in your footage. I'd like very much to see more, like the complete expressions of Dr. Wecht. Here I think I should tell you that I do repay your kindnesses to me. When ten-year-old children ask me such impertinent things as, "What kind of arithmetic does CBS use when they say they proved Oswald could have fired three such accurate shots and their experts couldn't?" I tell these irreverent kids that arithmetic is not all that is involved or that is important in life, that when they grow up and confront other exigencies they will understand that sometimes there are more weighty considerations than simple arithmetic. There are many similar complaints the immaturity of which you will understand that I answer in similar vein. They are your due. I will always see it is awarded, especially when I have access to larger and more mature audiences.

Here I must tell you how honored I am to have been asked to discuss all of this with you, either with both of us in the same studio or by phone. Need I assure you how anxiously I look forward to the opportunity of repaying my debt? I do hope you can accept this and any subsequent invitations!

I would be deeply honored if you would send me an autographed copy of the transcript of these shows. I never ask for autographs, but

Mr. Midgley - 4

I would like to make a special exception in this case. I will cherish this more than others will understand. You will honor me further with this simple additional courtesy.

You have, indeed, moved photo-journalism into a new era. I am not at all certain that it makes me comfortable, for I am old-fashioned. I am, however, impelled to acknowledge that you have done this, spectacularly and without rival. There is nothing, to my observation, that can in any way compete with it. Sometime I may write about it. Would you consider a coined word, "video-whitewash", appropriate? I think, as you have added a new dimension to reporting and integrity, a special designation should be created to honor it, to signalize it in history and assure it will never be forgotten.

We may, I hope, look forward to other such CBS achievements. When your imagination and dedication (as inevitably, I am confident, they will) lead you to make more comprehensible the race to the moon and you undertake to prove that it is, indeed, made of green cheese, depend, sir, upon any help I may be able to offer. This is a field I have not yet plowed, but with your example, is anything impossible?

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

P.S. You may get more meaning from my first paragraph if you add "In the pocketbook" at the end of it.