

Mr. John Chambliss
News-Journal
Wilmington, DL

7627 Old Receiver Road
Frederick, Md. 21702
7/11/91

Dear Mr. Chambliss,

I almost addressed this to Girard and Orange Streets but I suppose the papers have grown so much since I worked there in the early 1930s that more space became necessary. Probably larger and newer presses, too. Surely the newsrooms that then were adequate became quite cramped. I was on the News, morning, one of about six, plus two^{each} seated away from us in sports and in womens news. Two on copy, a city and a state editor, managing editor and at quite a distance a nice old fuddy-duddy of a virtually inactive editor who wrote the editorials, that is, those he could not talk one of us into writing for him.

I was the youngest by a mite so I suppose none of the others are still around. The wonderful human being of a city editor, Carl Wise, used to call me "son" to distinguish me from the copy boy, called "boy" and a year older than I.

In those days we didn't use notebooks. Odds and ends of newsprint was cut into odds and ends of sizes, we folder some sheets in three and used that because notebooks cost money. Not that Pierre Dupont, the then owner, didn't have any! ...

I've been sent your story on Mark Crouch. Interesting and mostly unreal. This is not a complaint and in fact if he told you more that you did not use I'm interested, particularly about Fox. Any thing at all about him might be of interest.

Crouch doesn't know enough about the assassination and its investigations to be able to appreciate what reality is and that he is not in contact with it.

He has me, not named, in mind in several places:

"An early version of the film script has been leaked to the press - by disgruntled JFK assassination theorists, Crouch said."

I did it. I did not leak it. I was acknowledge as the source. It was not to "the press" in general but to George Lardner of the Washington Post. I am not and never have been a "theorist" and no theories appear in any of my six books on the JFK assassination. Strictly factual and the basic factual books on the subject. All the others are "theorists" and I am not "disgruntled." Why should I be? I've gotten about a quarter of a million pages of those records Stone says are suppressed into the next century by a series of FOIA lawsuits several precedental and one causing the 1974 amending of the investigatory files exemption.

"Crouch ^{id} says he blames the premature condemnation of the film on assassination theorists who have been shut out, or those who disagree with the points set forth in Stone's screenplay." Wrong on all counts. Again, this began with me, before I got a copy of the script. Stone despite his backtracking since exposure proclaimed he was filming "history" in which he would tell the people "who" killed their president, "why" and "how." This means

that however he tries to crawl away from it now his film is to be factual. That is 100% impossible from Garrison's book or those he later said he'd contracted, especially the careless compendium of all the nutty theories by Jim Marrs.

On this basis along ^{with} "condemnation" cannot be "premature." The alternative is to let Stone rewrite our history and mislead and misinform the people and get away with it until any criticism or exposure is too late.

If he had been honest to begin with, had eschewed the obvious possibilities of cheap promotion and advertising and said that he was not going to stick to the facts the situation would be entirely different.

No doubt like most of them Crouch intends well but he is ignorant of fact and most of them, him included, invent it whether or not consciously. For one of many examples in your story, he says that the Zapruder film "in the complete, unedited version" which happens to be the only one save for four frames known to be missing from the original, "was not shown complete until 1975." False. It was shown in the National Archives before I studied it there the summer of 1966.

Thus he represents that nobody was aware that the President's body is thrown violently backward until 1975. Silly. I perceived it in the stills published by the Commission, confirmed this by study of the film in motion and published it in my second book in December, 1966.

There is more but I do not intend to put Crouch down. This does, however, give you an idea of what Stone regards as expertise.

With regard to those three documents, apparently all Crouch has, Stone did not need Crouch for them. He has been using Fletcher Prouty, who has written about those and other documents and has them and they also are published in The Pentagon Papers.

So, unless Stone is going to use prints of the autopsy pictures in his movie, which I doubt, I wonder what kind of "information" he needs Crouch to provide.

Perish the thought that the twice-Oscarred genius just wants a few names he can pass off as "scholars" or "researchers" or "experts."

I am interested in any little thing about Fox because he is the one who took the exposed and undeveloped film to the Navy lab and printed them under Secret Service orders and restrictions. He endangered his job and his retirement by stealing copies. Thus among other things I wonder why. And it seems strange to me that with Secret Service retirement he tied himself down in a general store with the risks that entailed instead of enjoying the freedom he'd work all his life to earn.

Seems a bit odd that he had a copy of Hitler's will, too.

So, I'll appreciate anything else you may be able to tell me, no matter how trivial it may appear to be to you. If you can do this, thanks.

By the way, is Joe Trento still there?

Sincerely, Harold Weisberg

Harold Weisberg