

experimented with BW in the field against the Chinese, and one BW research and development unit had its own air unit for experimentation, there is no evidence of the transition from research and development to doctrine, by any acceptable definition of doctrine. Nor did the Allies extend BW research and development to doctrine during World War II. Similarly, evidence indicates that U.S. use of biological weapons in the Korean War was experimental with some tactical objectives, a testing of weapons and means of delivery, rather than the implementation of the emergency plan for general war, though what is and is not known about covert plans and infrastructure during the Korean War leaves some unanswered questions about covert doctrine.

While highlighting our acknowledgment that there is no concrete evidence in U.S. documents currently available of BW in Korea, he fails to acknowledge either our method or our labors in attempting to analyze medical, political, and military evidence of BW use from the Chinese archives against corroborating circumstantial evidence from the U.S. and Canadian archives.

Edward Hagerman  
Stephen Endicott  
York University  
Toronto, Canada

*Editorial note:* Sheldon Harris preferred not to respond.

To the Editor:

I believe that standard ethics and traditions in editing the *JAH* impose upon you the duty to attempt to repair the hurt and grievous harm you have inflicted upon history, Harold Weisberg, and me by printing the Luker letter pretendedly commenting on my letter on his book review.

You have corrupted our history and defamed me by printing the most atrocious, false, irresponsible, libelous letter I have ever read in a journal of history. You have corrupted the subject and distorted the minds of readers.

Have you no sense of responsibility to history? To King's memory? Must anyone who examines the fact of his murder be subjected to such calumny? What purpose could you possibly have for publishing this cowardly, defamatory, and ignorant non-response by Luker? Or, do you too believe as a condition of the "in" historical mind that Ray shot King and that anyone that disagrees with the received official federal doctrine is fair game to anything anyone might want to say about him, and the established official fact, historical principles, ethics, evidence, and a lifetime of scholarship be damned?

David R. Wrone  
University of Wisconsin  
Stevens Point, Wisconsin

To the Editor:

Ralph Luker's non-response to my letter (September 2000 *JAH*) regarding his book review in the March 2000 *JAH* does not address the unrefuted and irrefutable facts in my letter. Instead he libels me and Harold Weisberg, traduces our character, and defames my professional reputation.

1. He diverted attention from Gerald Posner's JFK book, *Case Closed*, by attacking me, not the facts. Many have criticized Posner's corruption of the subject including several score individuals in a dozen specialty journals as well as in major journals, all readily available. That is a fact. Instead he substitutes a scurrilous, defamatory attack on Weisberg (whom I had not mentioned) with not a single alleged fact correct. Where is his evidence?

2. He claims to have asked the Internet for Weisberg's *Whoring with History*. He did not ask me. Instead of making a simple telephone call he libels me in the most grievous manner possible for a historian by saying I invented it.

3. Where is his evidence that disproves the facts exculpating James Earl Ray? Does he deny the rifle was not swabbed? Does he deny the window was so closed no rifle could have been fired through the tiny opening? Does he deny witnesses saw or heard the alleged assassination rifle dropped in front of Canipe's *before* the shooting? Etc. Instead, he cowardly hides behind calumny and revels in defamation blindly to embrace the false official claims.

4. By his own admission he knows nothing about the 1974 trial, one of the major factors in the assassination controversy. Instead of evidence he uses sarcasm. The thick transcript is in my files. The judge's statement that Ray's guilt or innocence is immaterial is well known to those even mildly acquainted with the actual facts.

5. He diverts with the Attorney General's report. But it contains about a page on the subject of the murder with all the facts in it false! It is official federal propaganda. The rest is a moon chase on theorists' claims. Luker must prove that (1) it is on the actual shooting of King and that (2) it addresses the facts in my letter.

6. He claims not to give homilies then gives one by citing a book. What does it have to do with the facts of my letter? It is a diversionary tactic to avoid the facts he will not and cannot address. His letter makes a mockery of his pretense of what my moral or scholarly compass should be when he is so lost in his misadventure he does not even realize that he has not a single fact correct and so ignorant he is not aware of it.

As if he occupies an intellectual and moral high ground in his asserted faithful, blind, obsequious support of the official, disgraceful, corrupt treatment of King's murder.

7. He asserts I am a "gofer" for Weisberg, yet he offers no evidence whatsoever to prove his false assertion. This libels my professional reputation and causes me personal distress and hurt to my professional reputation that perhaps cannot be fully corrected. I want his public apology or his evidence set down in a response to this letter. Show that my thirty years of work on the JFK and King assassinations, my lectures, speeches, radio and television appearances, articles, reviews, voluminous files, expert witness testimony in trials, books, etc., mean I am a gofer.

8. Luker's unforgivable libel asserts Weisberg and I are theorists who believe the government killed Rev. King. For thirty years Weisberg and I have said that we do not know who killed King. No evidence supports such heinous charge. To say government agencies corrupted the investigation is not the same as saying the government killed him. It is a historical fact.

I have spent a lifetime attacking theorists who impose their cockamamie theories upon the evidence, distorting, confusing, diverting attention from the facts. Theorists are the bane of history and a curse to an objective inquiry into the murder of Rev. King. One such theory is Ray shot King.

Luker must set forth the evidence that he does not and cannot have that either Weisberg or I hold that a government conspiracy assassinated Rev. King.

David R. Wrone  
University of Wisconsin  
Stevens Point, Wisconsin

To the Editor:

When you allow me only two pages to respond to the complete fabrications about me Ralph Luker included in his defamation of Dr. David Wrone (and defamation is not a refutation or even a response), you require directness.

I had nothing to do with the Wrone review of the second of Gerald Posner's whorings with history, the one in which he protected those who did kill King. However, Wrone is a cherished friend. I love him and his family and I have given him an abundance of materials, as he has me. He wrote a book about the historical importance of the secrets I was able to disclose with what I obtained in one of the dozen or so FOIA lawsuits I filed and by which I obtained about a third of a million formerly secret assassination records. These were some of the Warren Commission's dirtiest secrets.

It is worse than nonsense to defame the man recently retired from a fine career as a professor of history, to demean Wrone by writing, another complete fabrication, that I hired him as a gofer! I had this vast collection of all those once-secret official records and used only the official evidence in my writing, of which ten books have been printed. And for Wrone to have brought me what the FBI itself delivered free would have been not only

ridiculous, it would have required travel of more than half the width of the country each time.

After it became physically impossible for me to retrieve those records I had in my basement, I decided to use the unique subject-matter understanding and factual knowledge I have for a series of books titled *Inside the JFK Assassination Industry*. About thirty are now completed, more are started and planned, and contrary to Luker's fabrication that they do not exist, in the past week alone I've had letters from two professors who, between them, have twenty-one of them. The FBI itself bestowed unique credentials on me when, in an effort to end its perpetual perjury to keep secret what was not properly secret under FOIA, I put myself under oath rather than depending on immune lawyer pleadings and, with myself subject to the perjury charge that the FBI or the Justice Department could file, I attributed perjury, a felony, to it. But instead of denying my attribution of perjury to it, it told that federal court judge that I "could make such claims ad infinitum since he is perhaps more familiar with events surrounding the investigation of President Kennedy's assassination than anyone now employed by the F.B.I."

I knew more than the FBI so that licensed it to be felonious.

Nobody I know chose to go head-to-head with the FBI to make the suppressed information public, and nobody of whom I know ever got such an endorsement from the FBI and the Justice Department. As, if he were not the subject-matter ignoramus he is, Luker would have known. And with those about 80,000 pages of the third of a million pages on which to draw, the last thing I would have done, and I did not ever do, is to theorize, which really means fabricate, and have what I did subject to legitimate question. Which none has been since the first, my first book on the subject, was published thirty-five years ago.

Strong as my criticisms of all of them are, not a member or employee of the Warren Commission phoned or wrote to complain of any unfairness or inaccuracy in what I printed and one member approved and supported my work until his dying days.

I could go on indefinitely exposing the fabrications and intended defamations, but not within your space limitation. However, my comment on it will be added to *Inside the JFK Assassination Industry*.

An editorial policy intending to promote dialogue is fine but is not the result uncritical publication of obvious falsehood and complete fabrications, without even adequate space for response? That is like getting Hitler to write history. And in this connection, allowing that shameless phony Luker to refer to me, a Jew, as a Holocaust denier should have sent your hair climbing. It is an outrage and is of even greater outrageousness when I was one of the first to learn about that atrocity, could not place that article in any magazines, and in the end gave it to a small Jewish publication.

But for Luker to make this indecency up is typical of the man, as he exposes himself without realizing, from his ignorance, that he does that.

You owe Wrone and me, your trusting readers, and the precious history you failed and corrupted abject apologies.

Harold Weisberg  
Frederick, Maryland

To the Editor:

Prof. David Wrone took vigorous exception to Ralph E. Luker's deeply flawed review of Gerald Posner's *Killing the Dream: James Earl Ray and the Assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.* His letter to you pointed to some of the evidence indicating that Ray did not shoot King, and that there was a conspiracy. Luker's reply ignores this evidence and resorts to *ad hominem* attacks. He likens Wrone and "conspiracy theorists" to those who deny the Holocaust. This is an outrageous and reckless charge.

It is offensive not only to Prof. Wrone and "conspiracy theorists" but the majority of Americans who believe a conspiracy killed King, and African Americans almost universally think there was a conspiracy. In 1979 a congressional committee found that there was a very high probability that conspirators killed King. Are they all to be dismissed as wretched "Holocaust deniers"?

Luker says that it "is worse than misleading" to claim, as Wrone did, that "Ray was exonerated in a 1974 trial." He wants to know why, then, "he remain[ed] in prison until his death?" This sounds logical but actually betrays an unawareness of the history of the Ray case that is especially dismaying when found to inhere in the mind of a reviewer of a book on the subject.

In 1974 a federal court held a two-week evidentiary hearing, which is a kind of trial. I represented Ray. The evidence presented was subject to cross-examination, and in the view of Prof. Wrone and others, so clearly showed that the crime could not have been committed by Ray that he was, in effect, exonerated. But the trial judge saw the central issue as being whether Ray's 1969 guilty plea was voluntary, thus evidence bearing on guilt or evincing a conspiracy was irrelevant. That is why Ray remained in prison all his life despite evidence that the shot which killed Dr. King was not fired from the alleged murder weapon; nor from the bathroom window by Ray (or anyone else).

The root problem with Luker's review is that Posner's book affords no basis for a reviewer not intimately familiar with the case to evaluate whether Ray was a conspirator, a patsy, or a lone assassin. Regardless of where one stands on these issues, a serious book on the subject would necessarily have to discuss at length Ray's 1974 evidentiary hearing. It was, after all, the only time in the three-decades history of the case that evidence was tested by cross-examination. As Posner did not do this, it is not surprising that Luker would be insufficiently versed in it to be able to critically evaluate his book.

Luker praises *Killing the Dream* as an "exceptionally careful, fully documented . . . study" of the King assassination. Even a quick glance at Posner's sources shows that this claim is risible. Posner repeatedly cites

"MURKIN" as his source. But the MURKIN files are gargantuan. It's as if a Shakespearean scholar writing a controversial thesis about the bard had been praised for his careful and fully documented scholarship when his footnotes repeatedly referred to "the Complete Works of William Shakespeare" as his source. Posner's lack of proper source citation undermines his claim, such as it is, to be taken seriously as a historian.

Finally, I note Luker's assertion that "Wrone, Weisberg and the conspiracy theorists have yet to offer *any* evidence that government agencies conspired to assassinate [Dr.] King" (his emphasis). Since neither Weisberg nor Wrone has ever made such a claim, this is a straw man and a vile canard.

James H. Lesar  
Washington, D.C.

To the Editor:

I am dismayed by the inflammatory tone of the letters by Lesar, Weisberg, and Wrone, which seem intended to stifle discussion rather than foster it. Mr. Weisberg's letter promotes his JFK assassination studies, whose existence I did not deny but which are irrelevant to this discussion. It fails to appreciate the difference between an analogy and an equation. I did not accuse him of being a Holocaust denier. I am grateful for Mr. Wrone's correction of my misunderstanding of his position on the assassination of Dr. King. It is good to have on record his statement that he does not know who killed Dr. King. I also welcome Mr. Lesar's acknowledgment that James Ear Ray's 1974 evidentiary hearing produced no finding that a preponderance of evidence pointed to Ray's innocence.

The accusations in these letters may be a fair measure of their authors' skill at presenting an accurate, balanced, and critical interpretation of historical evidence. Mr. Lesar, for instance, repeats an accusation about Gerald Posner's use of "MURKIN" sources that was first made by Wrone. Perhaps he accepted Wrone's assurances that Posner's endnotes merely cited "MURKIN" without bothering to look for himself. By my count, Posner cites "MURKIN" sources in 352 of his 1743 endnotes. Take any of the 352 endnotes at random and it is obvious that Wrone's charge, here repeated by Lesar, is false. For brevity's sake, chapter 16's endnote 7 reads: "FBI summary document, MURKIN 3333, section 34, p. 109" (Posner, *Killing the Dream*, p. 371). The book is in print. Readers who care to check the other 351 endnotes will find Posner's documentation complete.

William Shakespeare catalogued the degrees of a reply: "The retort courteous . . . the quip modest . . . the reply churlish . . . the reproof valiant . . . the countercheck quarrelsome . . . the lie circumstantial . . . the lie direct." (*As You Like It*, v, 4, 96.) Readers can judge for themselves where each of our voices falls on the Bard's spectrum. Can we move on?

Ralph E. Luker  
Virginia Foundation of