

Ms. Nina King, editor
Book World
The Washington Post
1150 15 St., NW

12/15/91

Washington, D.C. 20071

Dear Ms. King,

after reading Rory Quirk's atrocious, incompetent, stupid and hurtful review of Mark Lane's most recent adventure in self-glorification I thought back over 78 years and could not remember a more overtly dishonest book.

This review is hurtful because it is grossly unfair to the CIA and because it once again misleads and misinforms readers at a time when it serves to promote this coming week's most monumental disinformation about the JFK assassination, the Oliver Stone exploitation and commercialization of that great tragedy.

Assignment of this review should have suggested the need to have it done by someone with at least a smidgeon of knowledge of the subject matter and if any thought at all had been given to Lane's record you'd have realized that more than slight knowledge was required. There are few more successful liars in public life than Lane and few who have so successfully commercialized their lies. This book is merely the most recent illustration.

If this seems strong to you, feel free to give copies to Lane and to Quirk. I am sending one to the Post's subject-matter expert, George Gardner.

How a lawyer, which Quirk is, could read as long and as detailed a book about, ostensibly, a lawsuit, see such lengthy quotations, page after page of what as a lawyer he should have known was irrelevant in that lawsuit, yet not see a word of quotation of the judge's charge to the jury or of the legal issue involved and then without question quote Lane's fabrication of that issue, assuming then what it is never safe to assume with Lane, that anything he quotes is entirely authentic, the opinion of one juror that it was "because The CIA had killed President Kennedy," is beyond me.

This was a libel suit and nothing else. There was no other question before the court or for the jury to decide. (Can you guess why the charge was omitted now?). The decision of the jury, in the words of the AP's 2/7/85 report as it appeared in our local paper, is that Hunt "was not libelled."

The case was decided on the absence of proof of "malice" by Hunt and his lawyers. The story was based on identified sources, no matter how wrong it was, as the publisher admitted, but there was no proof of the requirement, of malice, and this alone was before the jury regardless of what Lane says and as any lawyer should have known.

How ignorant Quirk is of his own environment (and may I suggest how careless the editing) he accepts Lane's incorrect description of Spotlight, the notoriously anti-Semitic newspaper of the most extreme fringe of the radical right as merely "a small newsletter."

Only gross subject-matter ignorance can account for Quirk's swallowing of Lane's fiction, that the inherently incredible fairy tales by Martia Lorenz originated with the House

~~Select~~ ^{Select} Committee on Assassinations when in fact they originated on the supermarket and other tabloid press - and were thoroughly discredited and disproven.

And this was Lane's alleged "proof" that the CIA killed JFK!

Your lawyer/reviewer, knowing from the book that Lane attributed this to testimony before the HSCA, had no question about the fact that it did not credit Lorenz's inventions?

Quirk flaunts his ignorance in concluding that he "is left with a respect for Lane's decades-long doggedness in pursuit of his theory..."

Had Quirk any subject-matter knowledge or consulted those who have it he would have known that this is a fiction magnified by the grossest and most obvious of lies.

He does not question Lane's lie, also used in the ad you carried for the book, that his "Rush to Judgment" was the first book on the Warren Commission. Months before it appeared the Post had a page-one story across the entire top of the front page (I think Memorial Day, 1966) on two books one of which, my first, had already been published, the other published a month later, both not only obviously before Lane's but he cribbed from both in his!

Lane also pretends that it is he who brought to light those originally-withheld government records. He refers to hauling "truckloads" of them away from the FBI building. Any lawyer at all familiar with FOIA litigation knows this is a very big lie, as I'm sure George Gardner will confirm to you.

Any perceptive reviewer, having read these repeated claims to have brought all those records, more than the quarter of a million pages, I got by about 10 FOIA suits, should have wondered why in so long and detailed a book not a single ^{statement} ~~one~~ is cited to any identifiable record. Some are quoted from the papers and one is quoted from a published source with the pretense that the record itself is cited. This is a meaningless citation of "Latzenbach to Moyers memo" of 11/25/63. Had it come from either the Department of Justice or the FBI's files he claims to have gotten he'd have cited their file numbers.

I do not remember a single such citation in the entire book yet Quirk had no questions about this ~~one~~ in the face of Lane's claims and did not even begin to suspect that Lane was lying again?

For your information Lane's first book was dated before it appeared. Its fame rests on the publisher's willingness to promote it at great cost and Lane's considerable promotional skills. In ² neither that book nor any since then has Lane brought to light any significant fact about either the JFK assassination or its official investigations. Perhaps it is asking too much to expect a reviewer to be aware of these truths but it is not asking too much ^{in him} to be able to see in even Lane's version of the Lorenz ² "testimony" by proxy at that that this hardly justifies Quirk's words, "Lane is forced to jump forward and back in time to pull the strands of the story together. Generally, he succeeds...."

There is more but I think no more is necessary for you to see that you have imposed upon the trust of your readers and promoted by stupidity, ignorance and incompetence a wretchedly bad, dishonest, misleading and misinforming book by one of the most notorious of the exploiters and commercializers of the tragic assassinations.

Because yours is a respected publication of wide distribution, especially among some of the more important and influential people, the harm and damage you have done is magnified because of how you will have influenced them.

I would like to believe that you will want to make some effort to correct and relieve what you have done but unless you were to depart from the norm and from practise, as with a mea culpa article (which I do not ask for) I do not see how you can now undo what you have done. I do think more careful exercise of editorial responsibility would have eliminated it, but that also cannot be undone.

If anyone is interested, as I have with many other bad assassination books, which most are, I've annotated this one for the historical record. With an illegible handwriting and not being able to sit and write at a desk I do not know that I can read all I wrote on the book but if you want anyone to examine this I'll make it available.

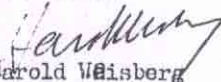
I also want to make it clear that I am not seeking any public attention for myself in writing you and expect none.

Something else that should have prompted even a college freshman to have questions and doubts. Here you have Lane boasting, with total dishonesty, I interject, that he alone, Horatio at the bridge as he always is, along with Dick Daring, having alone and unsassited gotten "truckloads" of FBI records, alone, and what does he have in his appendix? Only very dated self-promotion, all previously published. No question about why he did not publish a single one of the hundreds of thousands of pages he claims to have rescued from official oblivion?

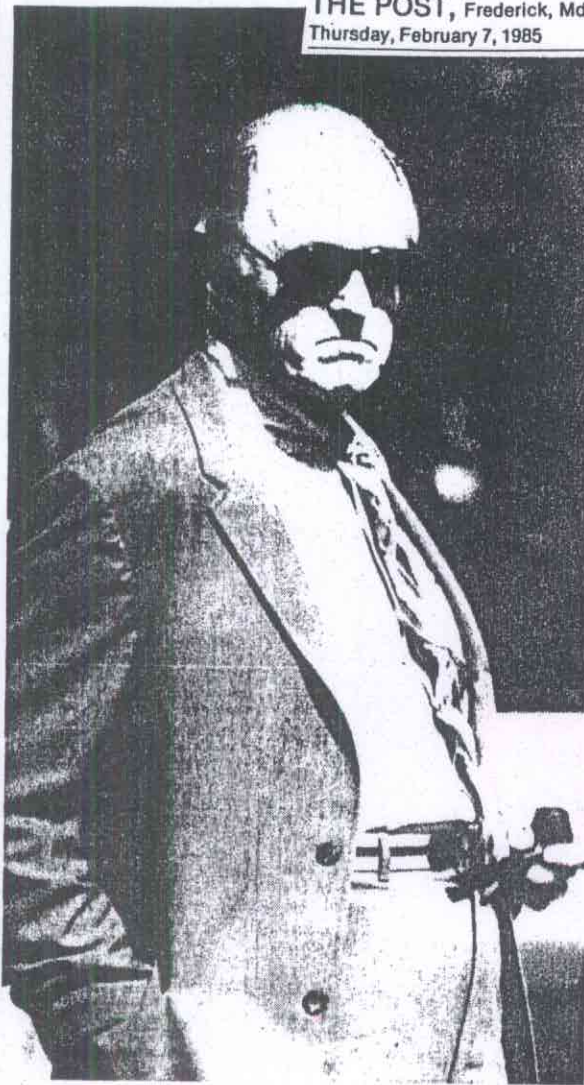
If you question anything I say may I suggest that you ask Lardner if I err or exaggerate?

I'm sorry for what you have done, as - hope you also will be.

Sincerely,


Harold Weisberg
7627 Old Receiver Road
Frederick, Md. 21701

THE POST, Frederick, Md.
Thursday, February 7, 1985



E. Howard Hunt

Federal jury says Hunt not libeled

MIAMI (AP)—A federal jury denied Watergate burglar E. Howard Hunt \$1 million in damages Wednesday, deciding that he was not libeled in an article by an ex-CIA agent suggesting Hunt was part of a conspiracy to assassinate President John F. Kennedy.

In a trial four years ago, Hunt was awarded \$650,000 in damages. That verdict was overturned because of a flawed instruction to the jury.

This time a six-member jury found in favor of Liberty Lobby, a right-wing Washington group that publishes *The Spotlight* tabloid, where the article appeared in 1978.

One juror, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the panel felt that no evidence was presented showing malice toward Hunt by the publication. The judge had instructed the jury before it began deliberating Tuesday that evidence of malice was necessary to find for Hunt.

Hunt displayed little emotion as the verdict was read and declined comment. His lawyer, William Snyder of Baltimore, said the two men would confer about a possible appeal.

Attorney Mark Lane, a long-time critic of the Warren Commission findings and other investigations of the assassination, defended Liberty Lobby.

Outside court he said that unidentified journalists "do everything in their power to protect the governmental establishment which has hidden the truth from the American people."

In his closing argument Tuesday, Lane repeated charges he presented during seven days of testimony, including claims of coverups and flawed investigation, while telling the jury that Hunt, an ex-CIA agent, and the agency both disliked Kennedy.

"The government of the United States has never conducted a serious investigation to tell us the truth," said Lane, author of the 1966 best seller "Rush to Judgment."

The focus of the suit was an article written by former CIA agent Victor Marchetti and published seven years ago. The article contended that a 1966 CIA memo purportedly said Hunt was in Dallas the day Kennedy was slain and suggested he had a role in the murder.

Hunt, who spent 33 months in prison for the Watergate burglary, has denied the claims.