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October 7, 1975

Mr. Jonathan Z. Larsen, Editor  
New Times Communications Corporation  
One Park Avenue  
New York, New York 10016

Re: George McMillan and Priscilla Johnson McMillan

Dear Mr. Larsen:

We are counsel to George McMillan and Priscilla Johnson McMillan, journalists with a national reputation for scholarship and integrity.

In your recent issues of August and September 19, 1975, articles by Messrs. Jerry Policoff and Robert Sam Anson contain factual references to the McMillans which are not only false and, therefore, defamatory; but further, were published by these authors knowing, or having reason to know, that these references contained false material.

The first of these defamatory references is contained in the Policoff article on pp. 34-35, which states that:

"As Moscow correspondent for The North American Newspaper Alliance, she had interviewed a young defector in 1959--Lee Harvey Oswald. She filed no story on her interview, but she did deliver her notes to the American Consul, at whose request she had conducted the interview. Following the CIA-engineered defection of Svetlana Alliluyeva to the United States, it was Priscilla McMillan who translated her book. An unpublished Warren Commission document includes her name among "employees of the State Department" who had contacted Oswald in Moscow."

HAUSSERMANN, DAVISON & SHATTUCK

Mr. Jonathan Z. Larsen, Editor  
October 7, 1975  
Page two

The obvious intent of the author and his publisher can appear only to imply that Mrs. McMillan was or is a U.S. Government agent who acted on the Government's behalf in suppressing the material gathered from Oswald in her Moscow interview of 1959 and again acted in assisting the Government to "engineer" the defection of Svetlana Stalin. The obvious conclusion drawn by any reader is that she is not an independent journalist but a Government tool.

The second defamatory reference appears in Mr. Policoff's article on p. 21 of the September 19, 1975 issue:

"The journalist who spent the most time with him at close range was Priscilla Johnson, the Moscow correspondent for the North American Newspaper Alliance. Ms. Johnson came to see Oswald at the suggestion of the U.S. embassy. She filed no story on her five-hour-long interview, but did report back to the embassy. Later, Ms. Johnson, who is currently writing a book with Marina Oswald, Lee's widow, was identified by the State Department as one of three U. S. government "employees" who had had contact with Oswald in Moscow. In any case, Ms. Johnson's memories of her encounter are as interesting as her background."

Again the implication conveyed clearly to the reader is that Ms. Johnson is neither an independent journalist nor an honest one.

The truth, however, is that Priscilla Johnson McMillan is an independent journalist who did interview Oswald in Moscow on November 16, 1959, and did publish this interview widely in newspapers subscribing to the North American Newspaper Alliance syndicate. It ran in these papers from approximately November 23, through December 5, 1959. Attached is a copy of her original story as filed by air mail on November 18, 1959, and a copy of the story as it ran in the NANA subscribers editions, in this case the New Haven Evening Register.

HAUSSERMANN, DAVISON & SHATTUCK

Mr. Jonathan Z. Larsen, Editor  
October 7, 1975  
Page three

There exists equally well known and available evidence that reporters from all three U.S. news agencies in Moscow were informed of Oswald's presence (AP and UPI) and Ms. Aline Mosby of UPI also published her interview together with a photograph of Oswald. None of them interviewed Oswald at the "request" of the U. S. Embassy. This can be further verified by Abraham Goldberg of AP and Robert J. Korengold of UPI, both of whom unsuccessfully sought to interview Oswald. These facts are set forth in the Warren Report at pp. 693-695 and I enclose a copy which, of course, has been available as a public document since 1964.

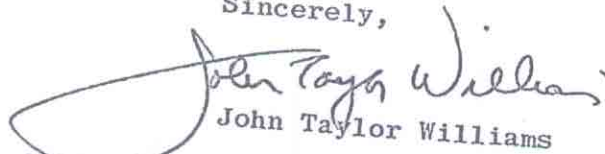
As to the defamatory allegations of her being an undercover government employee throughout this period, there exists not even the slightest reasonable foundation for such an allegation. Mrs. McMillan has never seen the purported "unpublished" Warren Committee document listing her as a State Department employee.

You will note that I have sent similar letters to the authors of these articles but I felt that you as the publisher would wish an opportunity to mitigate damages by immediately publishing an appropriate retraction as follows:

"We have investigated the allegations made by Messrs. Jerry Policoff and Sam Anson in our issues of August and September 19, 1975, regarding Priscilla Johnson McMillan and we have found them to be false. Specifically, contrary to the allegations made by these authors, Ms. McMillan was not a State Department employee, nor was her interview with Oswald in Moscow on November 16, 1959, arranged by the U. S. Government, and further, her story of this interview was widely published to subscriber newspapers of her employer, the North American Newspaper Alliance. We apologize to Ms. McMillan for the appearance of these false allegations and sincerely hope she was not damaged thereby."

I would appreciate your confirmation that this retraction will appear prominently in the next issue of New Times.

Sincerely,

  
John Taylor Williams

JTW/kg  
Encs.

cc: Messrs. Jerry