

Harold Weisberg
Hyattstown, Md. 20734
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Mr. James Aronson
The National Guardian
197 East 4th St.,
New York, N.Y. 10009

Dear Mr. Aronson,

Your editorial in the form of a report to readers on "The Murder That Will Not Out" reminds me of a letter I wrote Murray Kempton that I could not write you. After reading Kempton's introduction to the Popkin transparency I asked Kempton, "When Richard Popkin blunders into a whorehouse, may we expect Murray Kempton to proclaim that Richard Popkin has discovered sex?"

Yet as your editorial relates to Mark Lane, the thought is apt.

The credit you take for yourself is deserved. What you allot Lane is not. What you ignore, perhaps because you do not understand it or are unaware of it you may yet regret.

I believe the doctrine of the Lane book, as distinguished from his brave performance as a lawyer before the Commission finished its work, is reactionary. His scholarship is inadequate and wrong end, with his extensive public relations, are their own kind of coverup.

These are serious charges. I make them not for publication but for your information, for the last word has yet to be written and this is a situation that can erupt with the potential of a Reichstag fire. If you care for more specification than you will find in the epilogue of my second book, please ask for it.

So you will understand, it is I alone who have defended Lane from Connally's charge of literary scavenging. Perhaps you have noted that this slander is no longer heard. To the best of my knowledge, it is I alone who praise him for his early work, no matter how wrong I know it to have been if you restrict judgement to fact, for in those days he alone among the lawyers, in whose hands, ultimately, the freedom of us all may rest, ~~was~~ raised his voice and cried "injustice!"

That is the extent of Lane's personal contribution to the revelation of truth. His current importance, and it is great, is made for him by the willingness of his publisher, who blends the proper combination of unscrupulousness and aggressiveness, to spend money on public relations and advertising. His book adds nothing to earlier books, lacks much of what they have, and brands as worthless, like a god ordaining, some of the most essential information (see, for example, my chapter "The Hoover Diversion, Or The False False Oswald" and Lane's deprecation of the same material, to which he had access, or his treatment of the Willis and Altgens films). Can you imagine Lane sheltering Hoover and the CIA? Yet that he has done, both in his book and his appearances, several of which we have shared. Only editing saved him from public exposure on this point when he forced the issue, for until the appearance of my second book, I was publicly silent on these things, declining to fraction the side that says it wants truth.

How well we know the temptation to a hungry man when he tastes honey. Lane is not the first to yield. But that you should, unthinkingly, glorify him while ignoring this and what else you should know is shocking to me.

So you will ~~not~~ understand, I tell you that when he recently failed in California and his friends were worried over the consequences and they called on me for help, I responded. First, I took the heat off of him over his alleged but never consummated slander action against Wesley Liebeler by challenging Liebeler, saying if he were so anxious to get into court and Lane was too slow to suit him, why did he not sue me for slander, because I alone mentioned him in my book (in Lane's, all the assistant counsel, who did the dirty work, are faceless, for he is determined to "get" Earl Warren). You hear no more from Liebeler on this score. Next, when Liebeler alleged Lane's unannounced confrontation, I challenged Liebeler to confront me. He has been running since, finding it expedient to be on the west coast when he was supposed to have met me in a New York TV studio - I was there and leaving a message in a Chicago radio station, where I appeared, instead of his person. Next he was to have met me in a San Francisco radio station and didn't, and when I finally got to Los Angeles, expecting to find him in a TV studio, he suddenly found the urgent necessity of getting to the National Archives - on a Sunday. So, I have gone to Lane's aid, an aid he will undoubtedly deny he needed, not asked by him and despite damage he has done me, not because I am heroic, for I am not, not because he is, for he certainly isn't, but because it is what the situation demands.

Situations like this require of men of principle a restraint and self-control men of other interests do not find. Thus, I have been publicly silent over the false claims and fraudulent advertising by both Lane and his publisher beginning four months prior to publication of his book. Arthur Cohen has promised in writing to cease and desist, but neither he nor Lane have. Had I desired, I could have damaged, perhaps ruined, his book. I did not. Examine his second and tenth appendices and tell me where in a book you have even seen such text hastily added as appendix material. I have had someone with access to his original manuscript check but one, the tenth. It is not there. Both of these appear only in my writing. If you doubt the validity of my inference or the motive of my public silence, you are welcome to see my correspondence with both Lane and Arthur Cohen. They have given me no answer on this. There is much more with which I do not burden you.

So we are addressing the man's morality and ethics. You should have found your own answer by now, and it would have been appropriate to the piece in which you very properly take credit for your courage in printing his brief for the defense, as he called it. (His book is that only in advertising claims, for he does not allege Oswald's innocence - I alone do - and he did not do the dirty, hard work more appropriate to a lawyer on tracing Oswald's treatment while he was in the hands of public authority, again in my work alone, part 2 of the first book.) In a work in which redundant and repetitious footnotes become advertising gimmicks and in which there are more than 4,000, the single footnote identifying the one place this brief appeared is denied. Check it for yourself. Lane is indebted to the Guardian for much more than this, for it is the daughter of your former editor who made his book possible. Let he cannot spare you a mention in a footnote!

Am I better? Can I honestly judge this? I think so, for on the just-ended trip to California, instead of Liebeler at KCBS I faced an FBI phoned-in redbaiting, that I was going to address a Communist meeting and with a Communist stooge on the platform with me. As it turned out, it was a Trotskyist meeting, and I went and I began by saying I apologized for only my fatigue. When Ed Keating, of Remnants (to whom I am Le Peuf), was introduced, I answered the redbaiting of him by being the only one of the 350 present who rose and applauded him.

There are minor errors of fact in your story. The "new evidence" you say Jack Smith developed and "has reappeared consistently in the dozen and more books written about the assassination and the Warren Commission Report" does not appear in mine, which comes entirely from the official data and no other source, and it is my work, not Lane's or Smith's. Hoover, if you will read his statement carefully,

had his "hunting gun trained" on me. It is I alone who exposed the tampering with the photographic evidence (over Lane's opposition on one TV special), and that is what Hoover specifically addressed.

How can you say the "demolition" of the single-bullet theory was by "Lane and others" if you have read and understood the various books? Lane adds nothing to what I exposed, and actually has but a slight amount of what I have (compare with my chapters "The Number of Shots" and "The Doctors and the Autopsy" if you want to see how little of what was available he actually found).

So far as Mark Lane standing alone, the Holt claim you correct in your first paragraph, he is the one who never has. From the first he has had both financial and research help. Much of what he presents in his book is work done for him by others. There is nothing wrong with this. But he was never alone. Sauvage and I were. We both finished our work before Lane started. Lane's personal behavior with Grove may have prevented Grove's printing another book on this subject, specifically mine. While Lane was going around making speeches (an important function) others of us were doing the dirty, hard work he avoided but for which you credit him, not us.

I have written you not for publication because of the regard I have for the intent I know is yours and for your paper despite your clear partisanship for Lane and your own record with respect to me. I wrote you on May 9. You replied June 9, saying in effect you would hold off until Lane's book appeared in September and not answering my query about your offering my book for sale. The editorial prerogative is yours. I am not complaining about this, although I confess surprise and disappointment because I was then so all alone and so urgently in need of the help I thought would be forthcoming from you and the Guardian. You were not alone, for most of the journals of the left did nothing or worse.

Why, then, do I write you now and thus? Because I think you should concern yourself with the doctrine, the objective, of the man and the work you so unstintingly praise, attributing to him and it what is not theirs and ignoring what is theirs. As I said earlier, I have commented upon this briefly in the Epilogue of WHITEWASH II. I encourage you to think of the inevitable consequence of a focus on Earl Warren personally to the exclusion of the staff (which is not even listed - see his page 25) and the sheltering of the FBI and Secret Service in defiance of all fact.

If you do not have a copy of WHITEWASH II (to which you did refer) I can send you one. I have sent one to Cedric Belfrage. Or, you can pick one up from Jerry Agel, 598 Madison Ave., PL5-2220. So totally was I ignored by all of the press with the first book that I had press releases placed in the National Press Club merely summarizing the second book and listing where press copies were ~~not~~ available. I doubt if 10 were gotten. I opened this subject (may I suggest also for Lane and others) by radio and TV and that is what I have done for the second and arranged for the third. Lane has gotten rich but I cannot afford to waste time or money, for I have little of the first and none of the second, despite the success of my work. There are 22,500 copies of WHITEWASH in print, but taking not a cent from the gross for myself, we still owe the printer for about 7,500 of them. Of the first printing of 10,000 of WHITEWASH II: THE FBI-SECRET SERVICE COVERUP, 3,500 have been sold in three weeks, but we have gotten practically no cash from it yet. I do not even get an accounting of the Dell edition (250,000 minimum in contract) until April. And I have had no subsidy, in either cash, expenses or help. With your record and that of the rest of the press, I hope you will understand I intended no insult in not sending you a copy. I have them available for you and others in New York, and I sent one to Belfrage, who did review the last book and to whom I am sending a copy of this letter. If you disagree with me, let me know and I'll phone you on my next trip to New York, which I hope will be soon.

Sincerely,
Harold Weisberg