

69-01 35th Avenue
Jackson Heights, NY 11377

George Palmer
Assistant to the Managing Editor
The New York Times
229 West 43rd Street
New York, New York 10036

June 11, 1971

Dear Mr. Palmer:

Your June 9 reply to my June 4 inquiry about John Leonard's review of "Heritage of Stone" intrigues me. It is the kind of answer I expected, but it is hardly a believable one. Does routine editing extend to changing the title from "Who Killed John F. Kennedy" to "The Shaw-Garrison Affair?"

At any rate, I enclose a copy of John Kaplan's recent review of Harold Weisberg's "Frame-Up," and I ask you, if editorializing is not permitted in New York Times Book reviews, why this one-sided editorial attack was permitted?

Examples of "non-editorializing" follow:

"The silly season apparently is over so far as the critics of the Warren Commission are concerned."

"Now Harold Weisberg, the author of no less than six books on the assassination of John F. Kennedy, hopes to repeat the triumph of his "Whitewash" series with "Frame-Up," an investigation into the assassination of Martin Luther King..."

"A trial is a circumscribed adversary inquiry into legal guilt, not an undergraduate paper where one tells all he has learned about a subject in six weeks."

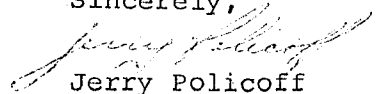
"Whether James Earl Ray was pressured by others into his plea of guilty...or whether he simply misestimated the odds when he compromised his case out to avoid a death penalty, we do not know. In any event, his trial would not have been the enlightening event that many had expected."

"Mr. Weisberg's grasp of the law is, to say the least, somewhat shaky (he is described elsewhere as a chicken farmer.)"

Kaplan's review was nothing short of an editorial from beginning to end. Is it possible that this slipped past the eagle eyes at the Times who are ever wary to reset type from one edition to the next to insure that no editorializing occurs in the Book Review?

I hope that you respond to this letter as quickly as you responded to my last one.

Sincerely,


Jerry Policoff

The New York Times

TIMES SQUARE NEW YORK N Y 10036

June 9, 1971

Dear Mr. Policoff:


Thank you for your letter of June 4.

Deleting that material from the book review in question involved routine editing in line with a long-standing policy of our paper.

Our book reviewers are granted full freedom to write whatever they wish about the books and authors they are dealing with, but we do not permit personalized editorials in the book columns.

The same reviewer would be free to write the same thing for the editorial page, the op-ed page or the Sunday Magazine, but the book columns are not intended for that kind of editorializing.

Sincerely,


George Palmer
Assistant to the
Managing Editor

Mr. Jerry Policoff
69-01 35th Avenue
Jackson Heights, N.Y. 11377

GP/ey

*John,
I just mailed this
+ will let you know if I
receive a response*

1319 Rutledge Street
Madison, Wisconsin 53703
May 27, 1971

Dear Mr. Leonard:

I am enclosing for your information and comment an exchange of letters between George Palmer and myself regarding the abridgement of a review which you wrote pertaining to the Kennedy assassination.

It was and is my contention that the editing in question was designed to alter the import of your thinking as expressed in the review, rather than to eliminate "personal editorials in the book columns" (whatever that means).

I would appreciate your observations on this matter, and I share your belief that there are many disturbing questions which remain unanswered concerning the circumstances of President Kennedy's death. It is useful to recall that Captain Dreyfus was not exonerated for twelve long years, during which time his defenders were represented as traitors for impugning the honor of the French military and the cowardly civilian leaders who were their accomplices in the crime of silence.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Levine
Richard Levine

The New York Times

229 WEST 43 STREET
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10036

March 8, 1971

Dear Mr. Levine:

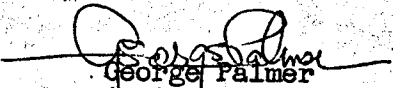
This is in acknowledgment of your letter of February 16.

Deleting that material from the book review in question involved routine editing in line with a long-standing policy of the paper.

Our book reviewers are granted full freedom to write whatever they wish about the books and authors they are dealing with, but we do not permit personalized editorials in the book columns. The same reviewer would be free to write the same thing for the editorial page, the op-ed page or the Sunday Magazine, but the book columns are not intended for that kind of editorializing.

The New York Times did not refuse to publish the findings of its own investigation into the Kennedy assassination for the simple reason that there were no findings. The investigation was discontinued when it became apparent that no new evidence or facts were being turned up beyond those already dealt with by the Warren Commission.

Sincerely,


George Palmer
Assistant to the
Managing Editor

Mr. Richard Levine
1319 Rutledge Street
Madison, Wisconsin 53703

1319 Rutledge Street
Madison, Wisconsin 53703
February 16, 1971

Dear Sirs:

I am enclosing two copies of a review by John Leonard which appeared in The New York Times on December 1, 1970. To my astonishment I observed that the review from the New York edition eliminated the last paragraph and one-half of Leonard's review, and in doing so, radically altered the import of his views concerning crucial questions which remain concerning the circumstances of President Kennedy's death. The unabridged version of the review appeared in editions of The Times available in Washington, D.C.

I am genuinely curious to know what criteria came into play in determining the censorship of the article in question in certain editions of your newspaper. Do your standards of what is fit to print fluctuate from one edition to another? Or did the same considerations enter into the decision to crop Mr. Leonard's review as those which led your newspaper to refuse to publish the findings of your own intensive investigation into the assassination, because you deemed it to be outside of your realm of responsibility to rekindle public doubts about how and why President Kennedy died?

I would appreciate a clarification from you concerning this matter. In its absence, I will continue to regard all editorial complaints in your newspaper against news blackouts as tawdry hypocrisy.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Levine
Richard Levine