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November 17, 1966

Mr. Jack Gould
The New York Times
New York, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Gould,

You could not possibly be more right than when you say (11/14) "The challenges and the answers to the points at issue in the Warren Commission Report should be presented side by side..." Nor could you be any more wrong than when you labeled this lack on the WHEW "special" a "journalistic oversight".

Members of the Commission and its staff were invited to appear and participate. Not one showed up. Now that WHEW has announced the presentation of the other side, I have asked for reciprocal courtesies, especially because my book is senior in this field. I hope you will also insist that on the "majority" program both sides are simultaneously presented and that I, who alone of the writers restrict myself to the official evidence of the Commission, represent the side that says the Report is wrong.

Nor has WHEW erred in the direction you indicate in the post. To this I can make personal testimony. Back in July I was invited to participate on the Alan Burke show, expecting it to be live and to last a half hour. I found a pack of lawyers laying in wait, without restraint or responsibility. I was, at the beginning, unprepared. If this show has not been titled, I'd like to call it "The Lions in Daniel's Den". I'd like to be able to speak for WHEW but I cannot. WHEW I have no doubt that if you request it, they will show you this tape. The other side was overly represented. I took on four, without the preparation and the advance warning of the eminent professor. Nor was there any partisan moderator to protect me. And there was no editing, such as protected Cohen in the telecast version. Again, I wish I could invite you, but I am confident WHEW will show you the unedited tape.

On at least a half-dozen occasions (I'm certain more) I've accepted confrontations with members of the staff of the former Commission. It is they who declined.

Inherent in your complaint is an additional fallacy: that the Commission side has been heard. Need I belabor this? On the other hand, books such as mine go to newspapers which want as many as more than a dozen copies and then find that it does not exist and do not review it for this reason and do not list it among received, also for this reason. I'd like to see a column on the fairness of papers to those criticizing the Report, especially to the first. Nor do I recall any column protesting the manifest unfairness of confronting a tired writer, then awake for 18 hours, with four skilled and prepared lawyers, who sought to abuse him for two more hours.

May I offer an additional suggestion that perhaps with your connections you might arrange. Let's make it a one to one, Cohen the Commission defender against me, the Report critic. Possibly one of the New York TV stations would head this suggestion,

coming from you. To further show my impartiality, I'd like to recommend Mr. Harrison Salisbury as moderator. He is a man of unquestionable integrity. He knows the subject. And he is very publicly on Cohen's side and against mine. This does anything but stack the deck in my favor. Let's see if we can get a dialogue going. I cannot with those magazines which assault those of us who went to right a wrong (without complaint of unfairness in newspaper columns). I have challenged each one and often the editors also to debate me in their columns or elsewhere and on any aspect they set, their writings or mine, the work of the Commission or any combination. I wish you could record the silence in your column.

Your point is well taken, Mr. Gould, there must always be two sides. This is the fatal flaw of the Commission's work. But it is not the fault of those fine people at Metrocenter who leaned over so far to be ~~honest~~ fair they actually damaged me in an effort to protect Cohen, editing out what substantiated my comments when what was edited was fact. Again, the unedited tapes of the transcripts will show this. I do regret that when, for the first time, TV addresses itself to this crucial national problem, does so responsibly, goes to trouble and expense to assure that the silent side be represented in overwhelming number, and even loads the "minority" side with the majority, unfair and unfeeling criticism is leveled in the public press. You should have checked your facts first. You can still do it. I know telegrams were sent. I know some few answers were received.

On my own, I sent copies of my book ~~WHITWASH~~ to the Commission's members and some of the staff and to the most important people in the executive branch as well as to some in Congress. I solicited proof of factual error. Not one has been alleged. It must be clear to you that I have not exploited this to promote my book, as I could. It is simply because I feel deeply that what we need and want is neither heroes nor goats, no flackery, just truth to the degree that mortal men can establish it.

It is now late to be seeking this. But let us hope that in our society it is never too late and that to the degree he can Jack Gould will also help.

Sincerely yours,

Harold Weisberg