

Harold Weisberg
Hyattstown, Md. 20734
June 12, 1966

Mr. Clifton Daniel
The New York Times
New York, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Daniel,

Your World Press speech interests me greatly because of my own experience with my book WHITEWASH: THE REPORT ON THE WARREN REPORT and because of my researches into the relations between our country and Cuba. I would very much like a copy of the complete text and reference to any similar information elsewhere.

I have given the Times about ten copies of my book. Whether one has reached you or not, of course I do not know. But if you have time to read it, I wonder if you could then re-examine the last and third from the last paragraphs of your speech as printed in the Times?

You also quote from the President's ANPA speech: "Is it in the interest of national security?" Here, as elsewhere in your speech, I think it might have been helpful had there been some definition of "national security", for it seems to me to be inherent that this designation is employed to mean only "military security", and here in only a Pentagon definition. Is it not clear that national security is not merely a military matter?

Assuming then, as I do, that national security is not merely military or of military determination, what is the responsibility of the press? Have we not a clear definition in an often glorious tradition Straight back to Zengari? Is it the responsibility or function of the press to guarantee the military and paramilitary, the policy-usurping branches of the government immunity from public examination of their activities, their intentions - their schemes?

The Bay of Pigs was either hair-brained or sinister. If it had only the given purpose, those who conceived and executed it require even closer scrutiny, as do those "experts" who approved it, for if there is any one thing about the entire fiasco that is certain, it is that everyone on the "in" knew it could not possibly succeed in that purpose, or was an indescribably fool unworthy of public trust.

Two things above all seem clear to me: that national security is not alone military security (here, when the potentialities are considered, it was the opposite); and without the most basic change in our society, the press cannot constitute itself a fourth branch of the government and fulfill its assigned function and obligation.

My experience with my book provides me little comfort about the diligence of the press in safeguarding what I regard as the national security. The assassination of an American President is a thing no element of the press should ever foreclose from its columns. As long as the most inconsiderable questions remain, is the President or the Presidency ever safe, hence the country and the institutions? Especially is this true where there are and always were, in this assassination, so many substantial questions about the most dubious inquest. In this case, is the sole responsibility of the American press to fall upon a few minor and powerless writers and are they to be confronted with the monolithic refusal of the real power in the press? Is this how the freedom of the press is preserved, and is this how it meets its challenging responsibilities in a society such as ours? Is this how it safeguards the "national security"? I think not.

Sincerely yours,

Warren Report

TO THE EDITOR:

THE review of two books on the Warren Commission by Fred Graham (Aug. 28) contained a notable error. Mr. Graham wrote: "One of the

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earliest and most perceptive critics of the Warren Commission, Paul L. Freese of the California Bar, remarked in the Columbia Law Review that the Commission was vulnerable because its real task 'was not to find the truth but to appear to have found the truth.'

Mr. Freese's remarks and the above quote, however, appeared in the New York University Law Review, Vol. 40, page 459 (May, 1965) not in the Columbia Law Review.

MICHAEL J. MANGAN.
New York City.

TO THE EDITOR:

I share with Mr. Graham a warm admiration for the job done by Mr. Warren as Chief Justice, but I do not see how anyone who has read Mark Lane's book "Rush to Judgment" carefully and with anything but a completely committed point of view can gloss over the page after page of fully documented evidence indicating that only a prior conclusion that Oswald was the lone assassin kept the Commission from coming to an opposite conclusion. Mr. Graham does very much the same thing as the Warren Commission in belittling inexplicable evidence and ignoring completely other indications that the Commission could not fairly come to its published conclusion even on the basis of the testimony in its 26 volumes resulting from the hearings . . .

PATRICIA MOSHER
Elmhurst, N. Y.

TO THE EDITOR:

In his review, Mr. Graham lumps my book, "The Unanswered Questions About President Kennedy's Assassination," with several other works by Bertrand Russell, Hugh Trevor-Roper etc. as constituting "the first round of books and articles that appeared soon after the assassination." Mr. Graham adds that these books and articles "tended to be inaccurate and improbable in their conclusions and were largely discredited."

My book appeared in October, 1965, almost two years after the assassination, so I am afraid that it does not qualify for the association with the other works to which Mr. Graham refers, some of which appeared even before the Warren Report was published.

Furthermore, I find it difficult to understand Mr. Graham's sweeping statements. Some of these books and articles are in fact discredited. Others—mine included—are neither inaccurate nor are they discredited . . .

The fact is that most of the conclusions contained in my book are identical with those contained in the four or five books that have been published in recent months . . .

SYLVAN FOX.
New York City.

NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW 9/18/66

Letters to the Editor

'Inquest'

TO THE EDITOR:

ALTHOUGH I found Fred Graham's review of my book "Inquest" to be informed and constructive, I cannot agree with the assumption of Government omniscience which underlies his main argument. He suggests that since the Warren Commission did not find direct evidence of a second assassin, one should assume there was only one. This line of reasoning makes sense only if one further assumes that the Commission discovered and resolved all the relevant evidence in the course of its investigation. These assumptions, however, are open to serious question.

The main point of my book is that the Commission's investigation was limited in both time and depth and that it was by no means exhaustive. In fact, the field investigation in Dallas did not begin until March 15, 1964, nearly four months after the assassination, and then the Commission's lawyers worked under severe and telling pressure to meet a June 1 deadline. Even though the deadline was gradually extended to September, the lawyers were hard-pressed to complete their chapters of the report. Moreover, the workload fell on a very few men, and as competent as they were, it was humanly impossible for them to resolve all the problems and pursue all the investigative leads. There was not even time to read and evaluate thoroughly the mass of FBI and Secret

Service reports. Under these circumstances, one cannot exclude the possibility that the Commission did not see all the evidence that existed.

Thus I cannot accept Mr. Graham's suggestion that a failure to find evidence precludes the possibility of a second assassin. He recommends accepting the theory that both Kennedy and Connally were hit by a single bullet (although he admits this theory is "porous"), because otherwise the assassination cannot be explained in terms of a single assassin. There is, however, reason to believe that both men could not possibly have been hit by the same bullet. Was I to ignore this evidence because it raises the spectre of a second assassin? The F.B.I. Supplemental Report of Jan. 13, 1964, is crucial on this point. And photographs of the President's jacket and shirt, included in this document (and published in my book for the first time), support the F.B.I.'s assertions. Moreover, Secret Service and other independent testimony supports the F.B.I. report on this question. I could not ignore such evidence.

EDWARD JAY EPSTEIN.
Cambridge, Mass.

'Rush to Judgment'

TO THE EDITOR:

IN his review of Mark Lane's "Rush to Judgment" Fred Graham flatly states, "It is clear that any jury, faced with the material before the Warren Commission and in these books, would easily convict Oswald of murder." I submit to you this is

rank speculation, for nobody can give any assurances either way at this juncture. A jury is one of the elements of our adversary system, and the Warren Commission inquiry was not conducted as an adversary proceeding. It is thus irrelevant to guess what any jury might have done or not done.

Mr. Graham's concession that "Mr. Lane's book is thus a brief for the defense" is incomplete. The book is indeed a defense brief; it is well constructed and moreover, it is documented. It in fact does create a reasonable doubt, and no defense is required to produce more than that under our system of law. The burden of proof is upon the prosecution, and the findings of the Warren Commission appear to us now to be the results of a prosecuting body rather than a body of inquiry....

MRS. SAUL FRIEDMAN.
Washington, D. C.

River

TO THE EDITOR:

IN the review of James H. Billington's "The Icon and the Axe" reviewer Andrew Field takes the author to task for "colorful" linguistic observations... accepted uncritically from dubious sources." Mr. Field goes on: "At one point, for example, mention is made of 'the Neva (Mud) River', where Peter the Great built his new capital; in fact, the name Neva is derived from the Finnish word for sea, and Mr. Billington has thus had a bit of popular etymology maligning a famed river foisted off on him." It is Mr. Field, however, who