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May 29, 1967

Editor, New York Sunday Times Book Review  
The New York Times  
Times Square  
New York, New York

Dear Sir:

Only enshrined ignorance, venality, or unabashed sycophancy can explain the appearance in your issue of May 21 of the work of fiction about another presented as a review of the mistitled "The Truth About the Assassination".

It is as irresponsible as any of the many shameful abdications of the intellectual community and, because it is in the Times, perhaps the least excusable. The unidentified author certainly has not done the research required for any honorable review. How, then, can he justify the expression of the slanderous opinions? Is it the business of the New York Times to print propaganda? Are you in the habit of soliciting opinion from those unqualified to express it? Is it your custom to so abuse the trust of your readers?

Your anonymous reviewer, if that is what he is, either did not read the Roberts slop or did not understand it, and he certainly does not know either Roberts or his history, else he would never have praised that fink for his "willingness to confront the critics head-on with facts based on his own experience and the Commission's hearings". The Roberts opening is that he cannot trust even his own observations, perhaps the only reputable statement in his work. He has the association with those hearings of the garlic wafted over the soup, as I told him to his face on the one occasion he has dared to get in the same studio with me. Then he had a famous champion, who also will not repeat.

Since appearance of that printed slime, I have in every way possible attempted to get him "head-on", with or without the equally ignorant and dishonest Salinger. They will insult, but they will not confront. Roberts's publisher is not so anxious to sell the book that he can or will arrange it. I have invited Salinger, whom I find to be less than plucky, to moderate this "head-on" confrontation. Can I load it more in their favor? Individually or together, they will not do it. So much for his "willingness to confront the critics head on".

Actually, Roberts mentions me and my book but little, never accurately. I challenge you and your reviewer to disprove this. Let me make it easy. The references are pages 23, 65, 82, 84, 88, 101 and 127. You will find that in some cases what I actually said bears no resemblance to Roberts's representation of it. You will find that in not a single case has he given the part of my work he pretends to be quoting or

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referring to. And you will find that in almost all cases he says, "Lane and Weisberg say", and then proceeds to ignore Weisberg and simulate answering Lane.

His is a slight book in every sense. You can check this for yourself. I do challenge you to.

And while you are at it, why not make a personal effort to see how willing Roberts is to get really "head-on" with me. I tell you as I told him and Salinger, I will make it easy for them. I will agree to restrict debate to their writing, on which, if it is genuinely theirs, they without doubt are most expert.

Let us see who writes with honor and accuracy, who respects the traditions of the American press and writers, who knows what he writes about, who will get "head-on" with whom - and who is the scavenger!

Yours truly,

Harold Weisberg



N.Y.T. Book Review  
11/10/67

## In Brief

**THE TRUTH ABOUT THE ASSASSINATION.** By Charles Roberts. 128 pp. Grosset & Dunlap. Paper, \$1.

Publish 10,400,000 words of research and what do you get? In the case of the Warren Commission and the book business, you get a fabulously successful spin-off called the assassination industry, whose products would never stand the scrutiny of Consumers Union. Consumers buy it as they buy most trash: the packaging promises satisfaction but the innards are mostly distortions, unsupported theories and gaping omissions. The second gunman, the single bullet, the grassy knoll, the conspiracy—all these assertions and others are neatly debunked by Charles Roberts, White House correspondent for Newsweek, who was in Dealey Plaza when the President was killed and who flew back to Washington as a pool reporter aboard Air Force One.

That he manages the job in so few pages reflects both an economy of style and a willingness to confront the critics head-on with facts based on his own experience and the commission's hearings. Indeed, as Pierre Salinger points out in a foreword, "The very thoroughness of the commission caused its problems. . . . It listened patiently to everyone, no matter how credible or incredible the testimony." By selecting the incredible and the contradictory, scavengers like Mark Lane sowed confusion. By writing an honest guide for the perplexed, Roberts performs a public service.

eral Southeast Asian countries. In Thailand the Buddhists have been relatively quiescent. In Ceylon they supported Bandaranaike, the Premier who was assassinated, and demanded the restoration of the death penalty to punish the monk who assassinated him. In Japan, the most industrialized of Asian countries, the gospel of the fanatical monk, Nichiren, has been reinterpreted to teach the rejection of industrialism. In Vietnam, the Buddhists participated most actively in politics, opposing Diem and later the United States; but Buddhism is not the political power in 1967 that it was in 1963. In China, it has been both restricted as an independent force and used to justify the current frenzy by citing an alleged Buddhist quotation: "To kill evil people is a good resolve." A fine reportorial job.