

11/26/73

Editor, The New York Times Book Review
The New York Times
New York, N.Y.

Dear Sir,

Infrequently a well-intentioned friend disturbs the relative peace and tranquility of my continuing exploration of corrupt government with what is more corrupt and is disturbing, like one of your adversary book reviews. The latest is the pretended "review" of David Belin's compulsion at self-justification. Here, even for you, there is a plumbing of the depths. After what you did to me in the disguise of a book review, this is not an inconsiderable tribute.

So after 10 years Priscilla is still writing a book "with" Marina? And after a little less time George ("Georgie Pie" to the Ray family) is still writing a "biography" of James Earl Ray? My, my, these really are writers, professionals who know what to do with lucrative contracts. Your files should show Georgie-Pie's description of his as a "happy" one.

What I've quoted is not the language of the "review." It is the Times' abuse of the trust of its readers. This is not rhetoric, for I know a bit about both "books." At ABA in 1966 Harpers' project manager enlisted my help in an effort to cut their losses, then in six figures. I can also supply a few FBI reports on such diligent pursuit of the literary as Priscilla's baby-sitting. As for George, poor fellow, you might ask the warden at Leavenworth, for prison mail is censored and George's pursuit if literary and historical truth begins with bribery. When I say "poor" it is more than a figure of speech. So drunk he was incoherent he phoned me before daylight one morning and tried to reverse the call. Priscilla had clamped down on his phone bills.

Both are galled by their pasts, which makes them ideal for you. Both are what helped the Hitlers, sycophants who see profit and fame in support of official fiction. And both would have to look in the same mirror, which is a bit worse than looking at each other, if the official mythology became entirely unacceptable. If Oswald and Ray were not lone assassins, what have they done with 15 years of their lives?

The transparent dishonesty of this self-defamation should be apparent even to you, with your history on the subject of political assassinations. One sample, "... the Report itself has sold some 122,000 copies..." The Times' edition (Bantam) sold something like 10 times that sum, to say nothing of the Times' next venture, its selection from the 26 volumes The Witnesses. There were other editions and this sale, if that becomes a measure, greatly exceeds all sales of all "critical" works. Most of the literature is not "critical" as any book editor should know.

You are dealing with sick people. You cannot have read my works if you think that what I wrote is not documented. They are based on such documentation that I have more than 2,000 pages of FBI reports I haven't had time to read. Yet it is not evidence nor uncontroverted evidence that prompts doubt, suspicion and disbelief. It is that "to accept the event as it really happened is to face the killer within ourselves." (In the daily Times "parricide.") With this kind of proof you can prove the world is flat.

If I do nothing else, I will leave a record for the future. In dealing with the wealth and power of the Times there is not much else one can do. However, I also like to give people a chance to face themselves and their concepts of their own integrity. So I make the Times and you an offer that is appropriate to this literary swill you have solidified in type. I had a relationship with a member of the Warren Commission now dead. It is recorded, among other things, in letters I have. This member of the Commission disagreed with your sycophants, those partisans you selected of all available to you. His doubts he recorded officially. His official recording of them was then destroyed. I have this all in documents, all properly obtained, many still bearing the

"Top Secret" stamps. And to his dying day he encouraged me to keep on with my work and to keep him informed of it even if he could not then devote time to it.

Without checking my files, I believe his doubts were in two areas, basically. He was satisfied there was a conspiracy. He believed that the ballistics evidence meant there was. He also believed "They have never told us the truth about Oswald." After this relationship began, he expressed these doubts publicly.

I am remembering back five years, so I am not 100% certain.

However, you and the Times can be. And you can face, if you dare, the kind of thing you have done to me and the kind of thing you do in this "review" and the kind of thing you did in getting Kaplan of all people to "review" anything by me. You can commission a Sunday piece at regular rates. With documentation.

If you have any doubts about how I would write it, I will let you, personally, or someone else, let us say Tom Wicker of Peter Kinss or Martin Waldron of the Times staff do the writing. I might stretch it to Geoffrey Wolff, who I think is not really, deep inside, the kind of man my experience with you depicts. Come to think of it, Wicker was in Dallas when it all happened and Waldron was part of the Times' original team, so if either is willing, without contact with either, I will accept in advance.

So, you and the Times need have no hangup on me.

Between you and me, as I once told you, there need be no unresolved questions. I now extend it to the Times.

Let us see, between us, who is confident in himself and his work and his integrity. Let us see who is principled.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg