

20734

10/8/66

Dear Mr. Salisbury,

The Xeroxed edition of WHITEWASH II I had expected to deliver to you yesterday when I was in New York was not available. As soon as I get it you shall.

After long silence I believe the time has now come for me to protest the hurtful and discriminatory treatment I have been getting from the Times. Whether or not it is the intent of the book department, the effect is a combination of boycott and insult that redounds to the benefit of those who place advertising. I believe what has happened is both dishonest and intentional and I think I can prove it.

As you may perhaps recall, I sought advice, including from responsible Times staffers, because of the nature of the subject. I also declined commercial sponsorship because it required I convert my work into a charge of conspiracy (that publisher has now scheduled a book by a right-wing former assistant counsel). As my reward for seeking to be as responsible as possible, I found in the Times that it is a fault to be painstaking and overwhelming and that my book, in a pretended lengthy review of it, was worth but an unkind and I believe unjustified paragraph.

Thereafter, however, all the competitive books which followed were given great space, various assorted favorable comments, and had bestowed upon them what I believe my book and I did. There is little if anything in these books not in mine and much in mine not in all the others together. What there is lacking in mine is an assault on the integrity of the members of the Commission. Those that pretend otherwise but explicitly do this are lauded.

Through much of this I remained silent. But when Fremont-Smith extolled the virtues of Inquest, which is but an expansion of part of my introduction, a wrong use of the FBI report it was not the first to use, a vehicle for the self-justification of the right-wing faction of the staff and a remarkable immaturity on the part of the so-called student and his mentor, neither of whom stopped to ask "why", with its particular focus on Earl Warren, and was credited with being first when it was not even second of the books, I wrote your book department after first speaking to Mr. Elefante.

The reply, from Fremont-Smith, was gratuitous insult and either conspicuous inaccuracy or an indictment of his fellow staff members. I had also inquired why, with the Times having gotten a dozen copies of the book from me, some by request, he had failed even to note it in books received. Of the latter he said it is "mostly because we are limited in space we do not list privately printed books". Need I comment on the kind of writing for which he does find space? Of the former, my request that at least in the paper of record I not be denied what I had done, for he had credited Epstein with being first, he quoted himself, saying, "It is probably fair to say that Inquest is the first book to throw open to serious question, in the minds of thinking people, the findings of the Warren Commission". This is not correct as fact, not reasonable as informed opinion, and he was to repeat it. The truth is that, without so intending, I launched Inquest 32 days ahead of schedule and that even people at Viking at that time told me and others that it depended upon my work for its viability.

The further truth is that this is a remarkably inaccurate and shallow book reflecting only the slightest knowledge and understanding of the Commission's evidence. The truth is further that I was ~~not~~ asked for help by Viking and provided it, help that was not forthcoming from the author who glows so in Fremont-Smith's eye. I have and I shall make no use of this, but some of my material that I provided for the defense of the book now appears in the appendix of the Bantam edition. After shockingly evasive letters I have now been told that this data did not come from me. Because of the subject matter I intend to drop it. However, your own staff knows this material is mine and has read it. This happened before publication date of Inquest. If Mr. Fremont-Smith had the knowledge of the subject matter that he pretends with his godly awards and decisions, he'd recognize my work in other books, too.

Meanwhile, Inquest was not able to stand the competition of my book, with its limited and improvised circulation and what amounts to boycotts by the important reviewers and what I believe it is no exaggeration to say are slanders. It went into paperback within three months of publication pursuant to arrangements made much earlier. In every case I can check, and this includes the major wholesalers, wherever the two books were sold side by side, despite the handicaps of WHITEWASH, it outsold Inquest heavily. We have actually sold more than 13,000 copies.

On the basis of this history, Fremont-Smith now uses his influence to tell the world that this book that in effect failed, is "a soberly reasoned study that may now be called the watershed book of anti-Commission criticism." This book, with ~~virtually~~ virtually no reflection of the Commission's evidence and inaccurate interpretation of what little it drew upon, is again "the first fully 'respectable' critique of the Commission's work." Of the work it says almost nothing. Of the manner of operation it documents what the "thinking people" of whom Fremont-Smith is the self-appointed spokesman should have been able to understand is inevitable in such bodies, but only in a violently injudicious and partisan way, the way of the right-winger Liebler is his opposition to the liberal Warren. On even his specialty I predict Epstein's knowledge and understand are so slight that he will not agree to a debate with me on it and I'd be delighted were he to have the assistance of Fremont-Smith.

So slight is Epstein's work that he never even considers the evidence that Oswald was the assassin. This he assumes. He is so uninformed about the autopsy that he said of it that it was doctored long after it was written whereas the slightest examination of the autopsy exhibit reveals it was altered two days after the assassination and the evidence is printed in Exhibit 397. This he read, if at all, so hastily that he was unaware of the fact that the official exhibit was gutted, and his ransacking of the archive was so superficial he even missed the receipts that so additionally prove. As recently as the Sunday Times Magazine of September 18 he was so unfamiliar with the evidence that he was still falsely claiming that "photographs of the President's jacket and shirt included in this document (the FBI report -HW) (and published in my book for the first time..." If he is referring to the FBI report, he was not the first to publish it. I was not the first to quote it, but I did print it in facsimile first. If his reference is to the garments, the Commission published about five such photographs. I can go on and on, but it is not my intention to degrade Epstein, who was launched into a rarified atmosphere he never sought and in which he cannot survive. It is to reflect to you the judgments of your reviewer and what he does to other people and the integrity of the Times.

From this childish adulation of Epstein Fremont-Smith proceeds to award Popkin, the professor of selective skepticism, other laurels and credits that are not his. All the things Popkin is said to have done I did earlier. The title of his book is a transparency of my chapter "The False Oswald". His concepts are politically expurgated copies of mine, and he has little indeed that is not in my book. One might have expected the Olympian Times to have made some comment on the strange if not unethical situation in which a magazine in the guise of a review uses the content of a book already in print that it is pretending to review as the content of its article and then uses its positic

is Popkin's attorney;

and authority to berate that book, which preceded it with all its contents and more with the full knowledge that it is the co-publisher of this article in the form of a book. The bullet that I first proved could not have the history attributed to it by the Report, the omniscient Fremont-Smith "suggests" ~~this history of~~; the conclusion of my work, that a new investigation is required, suddenly is Popkin's, because none of the other books, including Fremont-Smith's special treasure, dare demand this because they cannot without destroying all the major conclusions of the Report, which I alone addressed in substantive manner. "Mr. Popkin offers a partial hypothetical solution" in his second Oswald when I prove it earlier, didn't just hypothesize, etc. So little do your reviewer and Popkin know their materials that they perpetuate the factual errors of their immediate predecessors whose work was also less exhaustive than it should have been.

What is also conspicuous here is that Fremont-Smith has fixed upon two books that do not question the conclusion that Oswald was an assassin. They avoid this taxing tracing of evidence and play it safe. Such a position is more acceptable. Fremont-Smith adopts it for the Times. I believe this is irresponsible.

Aside from the question of honesty that I believe readers of the Times and the writers of ~~the~~ books are entitled to expect, there is what to me is a pressing and important one. He has done me commercial harm for reasons I cannot guess, unless it is that I have dared to ~~pay~~ <sup>pay</sup> dead before those with whom he is in association. I had hoped ~~from~~ fairer treatment from the Times than I have received.

I do not know whether Fremont-Smith has special channels to those he calls "thinking people" or whether this intelligence springs from his navel, but I do know the reaction to my book and the public-relations I have achieved for it with less help than I had hoped for from the more responsible elements of the press. I have no knowledge of what has reached other authors, but I have an unsolicited outpouring from the people of more than 500 letters that tell me with at least the authority of those he polled what I have done and what its impact is. If half the blessings bestowed upon me stick, I shall have no fear of the hereafter.

From my own news experience, I am led to believe that what I have done, aside from the content of the book, is legitimate news. Not to Fremont-Smith. To him it is an every-day boredom that a man goes deep in debt in the pursuit of what he considers the national honor and then deeper in debt to publish a book for which he has no distribution and no prospect of distribution, then makes a success of it and lays the foundation for those that follow. I shall survive Fremont-Smith's displeasure and hurts, but I do regret that they persist and that he speaks for the Times, which has its own share of responsibility ~~to~~ <sup>to</sup> blame for the national disgrace that now must be rectified. It is no help to truth for him to unthinking and unknowingly persist in trying to convince ~~xxxx~~ people that Oswald was the assassin when the best available evidence is that he could not have been. I think most people expect the Times to speak from knowledge, not the prejudices of ill- and under-informed writers. ~~xxxx~~ You certainly are not this way in your news columns.

I hope you will not resent this candid outburst. A man can accept only so much abuse without complaint, no matter how much he tells himself responsibility requires of him that he not complain so that people can work out their own thoughts and positions. I might better have used this time on further research. Had Fremont-Smith not spoken in the name of the Times I suppose I would have ignored it, like I have all the other similar nastiness, apparent plagiarisms and the perhaps usual throat-cutting that I find all over and am delighted that I can survive.

My willingness to trust you with my materials is unchanged. Perhaps the next time I am in New York I shall have a copy of WHITEWASH II for you. If I have one here first I'll take it to Tom Wicker. And I have almost 100% of the documents ~~noted~~ quoted and the pictures cited - 100% of the important ones.

Sincerely,