

Jerry Folioff  
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2/14/77

Dear Jerry,

If it is always time for the casting of notes I remind you of your experiences at the time of and following the Wecht acht after reading your 2/18/77 New Times piece.

Sprague, like everyone else, is entitled to fairness, so I have no complaint about his efforts to defend himself or about the quoting of others who have this purpose. But are readers also not entitled to fairness? Is not the Congress, the subject?

Sprague's public troubles began earlier, to your knowledge, with Mark Lane's boasting that Sprague owed his job to Lane. His private troubles also began earlier, to your knowledge, with unethical, improper and I believe authoritarian conduct, a strong effort not yet ended to violate Ray's rights. Jim and I separately protested this. Also prior to what you say causes the present flap is the gross and stupid error of charging the Memphis authorities with destroying all their King records, again Mark and again not unknown on the Hill and elsewhere, including the press.

I think it is unfair to omit the unconscionable leaking and the fact that it is all plagiarized and represented as the committee's own original work or bullshit. You have personal knowledge of the sources of all that is not fabrication. This kind of thing also gets around and is more than cause for a lack of confidence in both Sprague and the committee. Gonzalez personally has done more than enough since he was made chairman to force a lack of confidence. Sprague stood by the lies about Memphis. Both have cultivated the press the wrong way and have misused the press, from Gonzalez recently on the front page of the New York Post and on America's Black Forum, 2/3 and 2/13, respectively. I am sure this will be much worse when Lane's book is out.

There are defenses of Sprague and you omit them. He is not responsible for the size of the planned staff. Rick Feeney discussed that with me in September, before Sprague got the job. However, he also packed the staff at the end of the season in an overt and clearly understood attempt to blackjack the Congress. This you omit, too.

Your story was written well after the committee's and Sprague's personal prejudgment in both cases was public in many ways, including its report. There is no defunding this. Let you do not mention it and at the same time criticize the Times for its omissions. Is it wrong for the Times and right for you?

Your partisanship shows. In time you will change because in time the blinders will fall off. Understandable you long for a real investigation as most Americans do. Mine was the first book to ask it of the Congress. But when you are a journalist, especially one who has assumed the role of critic of the press, your longing should not interfere with your judgement or your writing. There also is no way you can will this gang into responsibility, beginning with Sprague. No way their dishonesties can be made honest, their incompetences converted into anything else. With Sprague, who is insufferably arrogant and self-important, the offenses are the greater because he is without question exceedingly able and also without question was warned in advance and in detail. Jim will confirm the latter to you. I think even Bud will. The warning extended to what has happened with the press and with the Congress and included what was essential to avoid justifying it. Unlike you I regard the criticisms I have seen as justified, a proper function of the press, even the press that is against cleaning these messes up to the degree now possible. You know well enough that those I now defend have never been kind to me. So I am again trying what you would not heed before, cautioning you about your own record and reputation and professional integrity. If Anson gets back to me, as he said he would, you may see more of this. However, you have gotten into bed with the Bob Cutlers, who actually accuse George Gardner of assassinating David Ferris, and the AIB, which is soliciting money on the promise of reaching the staff, which means Sprague. Be careful! Sincerely,

P.S. I hear Lifton has found Raoul and has a deal with New Times on it.

I do hope it is true.

It could be enormously important.

My concern with this has to do with the Lifton I have known and some of his other major discoveries. Like all those tunnels Brown & Root (read LBJ) dug through Dealey Plaza without being seen, the tunnels not found after 13 years. And those papier-mache trees also in and removed from the plaza invisibly. The assassination was from these trees.

Then there is the time he had proof positive that for the week before the assassination LBJ and Rusk had been holding secret conspiratorial meetings all around Texas preparing for it. Well, er, that is, not really Rusk. Did he say Rusk? No, he really meant Allen Dulles.

Dave is very bright, as he is also very crazy. He can be keenly analytical.

If he really has it this time it would be so helpful!

But I've been waiting 13 years for him to stop swinging from those trees, long enough to encourage the greatest care with anything he says.

H

JL- I decided to add this p.s. to the letter to Jerry