

NEW ADDRESS: Rt. 7, Frederick, Md. 21701

12/26/67

Dear Mrs. Lawrence,

I wish I could agree with your opinion that "the New York Times is trying to encourage debate". My own experience with this is to the contrary.

The Times sought me out two weeks ago. I was in New Orleans. My reply to Reporter Michael Kaufman included a challenge to Sparrow to debate me on specifics. As you can see, the Times used no quotes. This denunciation of all the "critics" was put on the Times syndicate wire, and not a single paper used any contrary quote.

Sparrow is a real 'demonologist'. It is he who blocked publication of my first book when asked for a legal reading by a major publisher who had already made a tentatively favorable editorial decision. The eminent Queen's Counsellor offered the opinion that my book was not friendly to the Commission and should not be published.

I am grateful to you for the clipping. I hadn't seen it. Note the skill and dishonesty with which this man who upholds the law addresses those he criticizes, by pretending that the case showing Oswald's innocence on the Tippit murder rests on the dubious testimony of Helen Markham. My own major point is that the Commission proved Oswald could not have been at the scene of the crime and then misrepresented its own evidence. This also serves to illuminate Sparrow's integrity as a writer, when he refers to the "masses of conflicting testimony" and says the "Commission necessarily based its conclusions on the testimony that it judged... to be reliable..."

On this it took no testimony. It didn't, in fact, on a tremendous assortment of key issues. Instead, it regarded untested reports from the FBI it knew was untrustworthy (and knew had been holding out on it also) as the equivalent of competent testimony.

Sparrow's article is but an infamous literary lickspittle. If you reread what the Times quoted, you will find it is obviously untrue, especially as he uses it, as though each of the false things he alleges is true of all the critics.

I have written the London Sunday Times daring him to confront me, either face to face, in a debate, or in their columns, with only specifics—that he not be permitted to indulge in such wholesale false generalities but cite specific evidence, and from my own work, which is surely the first he read in the field, since he read it before anything was published, in the Summer or late Spring of 1965. In turn, give copies of his writing, I have offered to cite specific refutation and disproof. He will not accept, the London Times will not accept, and the editors of the New York Times likewise will not. I wish I thought they would. Only the news department has any fairness at all. The book-review department maintains that my books do not exist because I had to print them privately. They refused to list them under "books received" and then went further and knowing it to be false credited others with them first brought to light. You can see the correspondence.

But thank you for your thoughtfulness. Don't know when I'll be up. Sincerely,

Judging from this item, The
New York Times is trying to
encourage debate.

Would you want to answer
Mr. Sparrow's statement in a
letter to the editor?



Mr. Harold Weisberg
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Md.