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XIV Posner and Random House's Impositions on Trust

Because I had a personal relationship with two of the characters in the story told by Sylvia Odio, I think it fair that before getting into the details of that story, the reader be given an understanding of the nature of that relationship to be able to determine whether it influences what I believe or write. *166 A here*

Loran Eugene Hall was in the veterans hospital in Los Angeles in early 1967 when I spent three long days there with him, the tape recorder laying on his bed where he could reach it to turn it off any time he might want to. As I was leaving the last day, when he knew I would not return, he reached under his pillow and brought forth an ugly looking hand ~~weapon~~. My recollection is not clear. I ~~had been~~ ^{was} a bit startled. I think it was an automatic pistol but it could have been a revolver.

"This is what I had for you if you were not for real," he said, evenly, smiling, no anger in his voice.

Because of this ^{startling} experience I was less surprised when the very same thing happened ~~to me~~ a few days later when I finished interviewing one of his side kicks on his numerous (he yes, numerous) trips to Dallas as of the ~~the~~ period of that Odio story, Lawrence Howard. Larry pulled his ~~swe~~apon out from underneath a rather well stuffed armchair, which had a d fringe around the bottom, hiding ~~what~~ the hand eapon he pulled out. My recollection is that it had a longer barrel. *But he was suspicious with me, too.*

I had two purposes in looking Hall up soon after the appearance of my second book, which includes a ^{long} lengthy passgae largely about him. Chapter 7 of Whitewash II is titled, "The Hoover Diversion." Its subtitle is "On the 'False Oseald'." (Pages 51-70) ^aHall figures in ^{about} ~~more than~~ 3,000 words of this vhapter (pages 53-60). He had had time to read it before I looked him up.

Most of all I wanted to hear him talk about those ^{O-200} events and any opinions he had about the ^{FBI's} ~~BI's~~ and the Commission's investigations. I also wanted to encourage him to use the oppostunity offered him to testify under oath about those matters.

Jim Garrison wanted ^aHall and Howard to testify before his grand jury. His efforts to compel their attendance were frustrated by Ronald ~~Reagan~~, then Governor of California.

^{was} Odio ~~is~~ then young ^{Cuban} ~~Cuban~~ refugee, from a wealthy family before Castro took over.

In my first ~~book~~, Whitewash, I brought to light the story she told about three men appearing at her ~~apartment~~ ^{apartment} Dallas apartment toward the end of ^{the} September, 1963, seeking her help, as Posner does not say, in their fund-raising for anti-Castro activities. (pages 152-5) They frightened her allegedly talking about killing castro. In my second book, Whitewash II, I carried this account forward with FBI records that reached the Commission the evening of the night the presses were ~~to~~ ^{to} roll on the Report. (pages 152-60)

In those last-minute reports the FBI identified ~~these~~ ^{the} anti-Castro activists as Loran Eugene Hall, Lawrence Howard and William Seymour.

With two of the anti-Castro ~~activists~~ ^{activists} was said to have been a man named Leon Oswald. The Commission concluded that this man could not have been ~~Harvey~~ ^{Harvey} Oswald because he ~~was~~ then en route to Mexico City.

Reagan refused extradition and legall, y that was the end of it.

As we discussed this and Hall came to realize that there really was nothing Garrison could do to him as long as he told the truth only, he also could see that there could be an advantage to him in testifying under oath because he could thereafter say, if he was bothered by unwelcoming questioning, "I have told the full story under goth, subject to the penalties of perjury if I lied, and I now have no more to say about it." He saw also that he would still be free to say anything he wanted to say if questioned by someone to whom he felt like talking.

Three days of tapes, from ~~no~~ breakfast to supper, turned out to be more than I was willing to take the time to transcribe, particularly when there was no pressing reason to do so. ~~But~~ at some point~~s~~ after we had spent some time together ~~and he knew~~ ^{was interviewed} what I was ~~saying~~ ^{suggesting} and thought, he decided to go to New Orleans voluntarily. However, he had some conditions.

"Palf, I'll go, he said, and then stated his conditions. "I want you to be with me ~~and I want us~~ to have connecting rooms in the hotel or motel."

I had to tell th him the truth, that I might not be able to go ~~so~~ simply because I could not afford it. I said ~~that~~ ^{it} would be more likely that I could not be with him but that ~~I~~ then had the cash, did not have to write bad checks or spend ~~my~~ plastic money I did not have, I'd be there. He ~~was~~ ^{he did} was to let me know and I could not spare the money then. I encouraged him to look ^{up} Louis Ivon, Garrison's chief investigator, ~~as~~ as soon as he got there, ~~and~~ then to speak to ^{an} "Moo" Sciambra ^{an assistant D.A.} as ~~soon~~ as he could, and then to think of all his many friends and former associates he'd be able to see on what could be ^{an} expense-paid vacation.

His finances were not all that good then so he used my friend Art Kevill, then with KHJ news in Los Angeles, to call me. After Art did "Skip," Hall's best-known nickname, took the phone.

I was not able to go, he went alone and, as I knew would happend but did not tell him in advance. he in effect pulled Garrison's teeth. Garrison thereafter said nothing at all about Hall and his associates ~~off~~ 1963.

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Then the nuts of the House assassins committee wanted him to testify. Not without reason, he was apprehensive about them. They were pretty wild and publicly nitty in what they said. Came another phone call from ~~Scott~~ Art and soon Hall was on the phone.

"Hey, pal, ^{those} bastards in Washington have subpoenaed me. I'd like you to appear with me, sit by me when I testify."

By then it was no longer safe for me to drive to Washington, I have not done that since 1977, two years after the first venous thrombosis was diagnosed and treatment with anticoagulents began. Again I was honest with Hall. I told him that unlike with Garrison, with the nuts and all their preconceptions and TV cameras on them, he ^{very much} needed a lawyer he could trust, not a friend who knew him and the facts. I ^{pressed} him firmly on that but I also added that if it were possible I'd be in the audience. He listened to me and arranged for a cousin, a lawyer in Kansas, where ~~he~~ Hall came from, to be with him.

It happened that the day of Hall's testimony I had to be in Washington for a FOIA lawsuit. The status call was for ¹ ten in the morning. ^{I got there by early morning my fly hound.} When Jim Lesar and I finished with that he drove me to the newest of the three House office buildings, the one I had never been in, and, as not familiar with. Jim took me to the closest entrance ^{and} told me how to get to the hearing room, and it was full, with people standing around the back and along the side close to that door. A young friend, then just out of college, Scott Maloche, since ^{excellent} known for his TV work, saw me and gave me his seat, one row from the door and at the end of ^{the} row of seats closer to the door.

The committee had not yet entered the hearing room. Hall, sitting at the witness table near the dais, turned around and saw me.

"Hey, pal! I see you got here," ^{he called out, walking} waving toward me while he spoke at close to a shout for his voice to carry. ^{to me} He came up, gave me a bear hug, with the audience all looking at us in surprise, and then said, "How's about we go get a drink when this shit is over?"

Having seen George Lardner, the Washington Post's assassinations expert and friend nearby, I asked him, loud enough for George to hear, "Okay if I bring a reporter friend."

"Sure, pal, if he is your friend. Your friend is my friend."

For a reason I now do not remember, there was no hearing that afternoon, It had been schedule for one. ^{it took} It was not long after one that the notification of postponement ended it.

With his cousin and a young woman lawyer from that firm, Hall came up to me when they left the witness table. ~~There was no time for any other~~

"We are at the Shoreham," he said. "How about meeting us in the bar there?"

^dLardner phoned his ~~desk to say~~ he'd be delayed and we spent the entire afternoon and into the supper hour drinking and talking, Lardner taking notes, although it was off the record.

From time to time Hall got ~~as~~ carried away telling the stories he loved to tell.

When I said, "cut the bullshit now, Skip," he'd smile and amend what he had said. ^{On insist it was true}

It was all very friendly. The Hall party drove me home. They went over ^{my} sole files, ~~and~~ Hall borrowed some pictures of himself to copy.

He never returned them.

So, when Posner wanted Hall pictures, I could lend him only ~~the ones~~ that remained. ^{of all kind} Of all the many photographs I have, Posner was not interested in any other one, as Trisha's receipt states.

Including about his life in a Castro jail where he benefitted from being next to ~~no~~ or with the Florida Mafia bigshot, Santo Trafficante. I remember Hall said that the Cubans permitted special food to be sent to Trafficante and Trafficante shared it ^{him} with Hall. He was a natural raconteur and he relished it, particularly because his soldier-of-fortune experiences were not everyday events and most people liked to hear those stories.

In any event, if this makes me prejudiced, as I think it does not in any sense, unlike Posner, I have no secrets. As my bobtailed account of that long afternoon of relaxed conversation with drinking that made none of us drunk, my relations with Hall were friendly, but that did not blind me to the fact that he was sometimes prone to ~~exag-~~ ^{tales}gerate and tall tales were not beyond him. That relationship had improved from the time he said he was ready to shoot me and displayed his means of doing it ^{right then and there}.

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I've already reported the friendship that developed between ~~one~~ of Vinegar Joe Stilwell's four top ~~assistants~~ assistants in Southeast Asia, Colonel L. Robert Castorr and his ~~then~~ wife ~~Trudy~~ Trudy and my wife and I ^{we} became friends despite what ~~Boh~~ later said was my fair and accurate reporting of FBI and Secret Service records that were prejudiced against him.

My file reflects what I had forgotten, that I undertook to ~~share~~ share the information they had about the situation in Dallas at the time of the assassination. This included their close friendships in the police department and the business and industrial community there and with refugee Cubans some of whom they knew very well both socially and through ^{personal} ~~involvement~~ involvement, mostly Trudy's, with Catholic Cuban Relief.

At that time LIFE magazine had considerable interest in the Odio story and in Hall in particular. Richard Billings, when he was unable to get to California himself, sent a Cuban photographer, Miguel Ococa to ^{meet} ~~met~~ with a source I then had. Ococa went of on his own instead of doing what had been ^{arranged} ~~arranged~~. That resulted in a situation that cost my source his job. But that did not deter my inviting Billings, with the Castorr's assent, to ~~share~~ share in the interview ^{we} had planned to tape. My file reflects two sets of tapes that Billings had transcribed at LIFE. Each, single-spaced, is about ^a ~~half~~ half-inch thick. That represents long sessions and much information most of ~~which~~ which it is not now necessary to ^{repeat} ~~recall~~ recall. But it does reflect that, unlike Posner, who knew what he wanted to say before he began ~~his~~ what for lack of a better word I'll call what it was not in any sense, his "investigation" that was predetermined to undermine and demean Odio.

Knowing as he did that I am the one who brought the Odio story to light and at the same time did the same thing with Hall and his then associates, Posner had no interest in what information I had because he had no interest in impartiality. I conducted quite a few interviews seeking the truth. Those ^I interviewed ranged from Odio's relatives to a priest who knew her well and ~~wealthy~~ wealthy Dallasites who ^{helped} ~~helped~~ her when she was in need of help, ^{after surgery} a matter of consequence Posner did not ^{see} ~~fit~~ fit to report. He preferred his own ~~preconceived~~ prejudices, prejudices indispensable to his pat formula that Oswald was entirely alone and was the only assassin.

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Posner's pre-conception of what in the fake case he was *cherry-picking up*,

~~This~~ required blatant dishonesty but that was no problem at all to Posner. He was *up to* ~~just~~ dishonest ~~and~~ in a manner that cannot be detected in his writing without exceptional knowledge of the actualities that few people ~~had~~. ^{have} There was nothing too minor for him not to corrupt in making the predetermined case that is so indispensable to his formula book, designed for a ~~near~~ market ^{enlarged} ~~enlarged~~ enormously by the Oliver Stone movie, the market for which Posner and Random House ~~are~~ ^{are} aimed ^{on} with the opposite side of the controversy, ^{if you are} in as close to total support of the government's basic conclusion as any shyster could contrive but a more adept and less principle ^{d/} shyster, which Posner makes without question he is, could do better ^{it's} ~~as~~ ^{he} did and as we ~~shall~~ ^{shall} see.

These may seem like strong charges, ~~and~~ ^{they} are and they are intended to be. But they are not all.

Another form of dishonesty for a writer ~~is~~ to take the work of another and present it as his own, plagiarizing. So there can be no doubt at all about what I mean by this, I use the definition of Posner's own publisher, Random House. ^{in its unabridged dictionary on it} This is how ~~it~~ ^{it} defines the noun "plagiarism" and the verb "plagiarize":

plagiarism (plɪˈzjə rɪz/əm, -jē ə rɪz/-), n. 1. the appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one's original work. 2. something appropriated and presented in this manner. [PLAGIAR(Y) + -ISM] —plagiarist, n. —plagiaristic, adj.
plagiarize (plɪˈzjə rɪz/, -jē ə rɪz/), v., -rized, -rizing. —v.t. 1. to appropriate by plagiarism. 2. to appropriate ideas, passages, etc. from (a work) by plagiarism. —v.i. 3. to commit plagiarism. Also, esp. Brit., plagiarise. [PLAGIAR(Y) + -IZE] —plagiarizer, n.

(use only definitions)

Before getting into the story Odio told and Posner's treatment of it and of the existing evidence relating to it, because I also used this dictionary to be certain of the precise meaning of a word Posner used prejudicially, here is what that word means and then is the prejudicial if not dishonest use Posner made of it:

fractious (frakˈʃheɪs), adj. 1. peevish; irritable; quarrelsome: an incorrigibly fractious young man. 2. fractory or unruly: a fractious animal that would not submit to the harness. [FRAC(T)OS + -IOUS] —fractiously, adv. —fractiousness, n. —Syn. 1. testy, capricious, petulant, snappish, peevish, waspish, touchy. 2. stubborn, difficult. —Ant. 1. temperate. 2. tractable.

In poisoning the well of opinion of his readers against Odio (on Page 178) in his account of her troubled marriage and of her known illnesses that Posner does not report, ^{he} Posner writes:

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"By the time of ~~her~~ Oswald's story, she had a history of emotional problems. In Puerto Rico, where she had lived before moving to Dallas in March 1963, she had ~~been~~ seen a psychiatrist over her fractious marriage."

This is about as imaginative a ^ddescription of a marriage in which the ~~husband~~ ^{husband} abandons a wife with four small children as can be contrived.

~~Posner~~ Posner does not say that the ^{Herreras} ~~Herreras~~ had a "fractious" marriage, only that Sylvia did. *Or, she was the cause.*

In his next paragraph Posner makes his first mention of the psychiatrist Odio had for seven months before the assassination, been ~~seen~~ seeing in Dallas, Dr. Burton C. Einspruch. Posner's end note on this highlights the prejudicial note of his lie on the very next page when he refers to Einspruch again. There, ~~selectively~~, Posner selects what he can misuse to ~~mis~~ misrepresent Einspruch's professional opinion of Odio. ^{also} There, Posner has his big lie about "Einspruch; "He was not questioned until 1978," when he was deposed by the House assassins committee.

Posner's Footnote 45, ~~is~~ on page 534 of his Notes, reads:

- 45. Burt Griffin memo to W. David Slawson, May 16, 1964, House Select Committee on Assassinations (JFK Document 002969); deposition of Dr. Burton C. Einspruch, July 11, 1978, House Select Committee on Assassinations, n. 5 (JFK Document 010069).

The first part of this note makes an unusual citation to a document to which he had access here, my ~~xerox~~ ^{xerox} of that memo from the Commission's files. The second part of the note cites Einspruch's deposition testimony before the House assassins committee. Posner cites no ~~no~~ volume of those hearings so the reader wanting to know all that Einspruch said ~~can~~ can find it. ^{The twelve volumes of} That committee's printed records takes ^{up} ~~it~~ ^{it} fifteen inches of shelf space, ~~quite~~ quite a search to make without knowing the volume Posner just manages to fail to cite, ^g ~~not~~ citing it is a departure from his practise. And there certainly can be a reason for this. ^{omitting to state subject and} The subject of that memo he cites, without telling the reader where to find it is what makes a liar out of Posner in saying that Einspruch had not been questioned before his 1978 House committee testimony. That subject from the first page of the actual memo is:

"Interview with Dr. Burton C. Einspruch, Dallas, Texas, (3:00 ~~to~~ ^{to} 4:00 P.M. Monday, April 13, 1964."

Einspruch had been questioned by the Warren Commission, Posner knew it and knowing it ~~he~~ lied about it after giving it an incomprehensible citation.

Separate from this, and we certainly will get to it, is the fact that in his ^{definition} ~~partial~~ partial quotations of Dr. Einspruch Posner succeeds in saying the opposite of what that psychiatrist ^{did the commission} actually said. My point here is to leave the reader without any question about my use of words.

It is beyond question and to Posner's certain knowledge, The psychiatrist was questioned ^{ed} for an entire hour by the Commission and in writing that he ~~had~~ "was not questioned until 1978" ^{Posner's} Posner lied and knew he lied. This means that his lie is deliberate and when we come to what Einspruch said when questioned by the Commission his purpose in lying will be apparent.

Unlike Posner, who as we have seen ~~practices~~ ^{practises} trickery with his end notes, and contrary to the preference of professional scholars, who just love those end notes and are rarely in a position to evaluate them, I prefer that my reader know when reading what I write what my source is. This is often so inconspicuous the large number of citations in parenthesis in my books is not apparent ^{to most} ^{ers} in reading. Unlike Posner, virtually all my sources have been official. I engage in no mind reading, as he does, not theorizing, as he does extensively and basically in the book in which he pretends he does none of this.

My reference above to Herrera abandoning Sylvia ^{Odio Posner} ~~he~~ knew about because it is on Page 55 of Whitewash II and the internal evidence of his book is that he used that extensively without once mentioning it. Before going into what I there state at greater length, ^{here} I cite the source, the report of an FBI agent whose name I give along with the identification of two different FBI files in which it is filed and the date on which he filed it. I wanted the reader to be able to evaluate what I wrote and so the first thing I did, unlike Posner, ^{is inform the reader fully in the text, eliminating} as it were just seen, giving a note that defies access to his ~~the sometimes unwanted need to turn to the back of the book,~~ source to virtually all his readers. While ^{AP} ^{it's} intend this as a means by which Posner's writing can be evaluated, I suggest it also provides a means of comparing his writing and mine when as we soon do we get into the Odio story, and whether or not he gives conclusory statements of his own rather than the actual content of what he says he is citing and the extent to which I go to give the readers what my source, in this case the FBI, actually said,

While more of these actualities of which Posner knew and which he suppressed
 his book to be able to fabricate a phony case against Odio will interest us later,
 I here cite what supports my statement that Herrera ~~and~~ ^{Odio} abandoned ~~her~~ and their children,
 the oldest of the four of whom was only six ~~at~~ when he banadoned them:

Sylvia Odio, and her former husband, Guillermo Herrera, fled to Puerto Rico where he was employed as a chemical engineer. When his company sent him to Germany in 1962, he abandoned his wife with four very small children, the oldest of whom was six years old. She had "no means of support". Because of these problems, her concern for her imprisoned parents and about her ability to care for her children and herself, Mrs. Odio did have psychiatric problems.

None of this is in Posner's book. Instead he pretends ^{falsely} ~~to~~ ^{that} Odio was ^{unfit,} incompetent and irrational. For a young woman exiled from a life of ~~wealth~~ ^{wealth}, all alone in a foreign land with four such young children to care for because she was abandoned by her husband, not to react, not to have emotional problems, would be the abnormality. ^{as serious problems} Reacting to the ~~and~~ ^{and} Posner also does not state, overcoming them, is ^{actual} both ~~the norm~~ and her record.

My major purpose in this chapter is to enable the reader to make independent judgments about Posner and me and about our writing. What follows, the Odio story itself, is a matter of controversy. Controversies are not resolved by overt, deliberate lies. I have said that Posner is a liar and I begin by giving ^{the} ~~the~~ reader proof of it. There will be more. But because it is a far from normal to characterize as I have, and I have done that because there should be a record of it and because the reader should be informed directly and openly, with no quibbles, I admit to unorthodoxy.

This is not a matter of little consequence. ~~This~~ ^{This} is as serious a matter as there can be in our ~~society~~ country and our kind of society. ~~Nothing~~ ^{Nothing} gets closer to the basic integrity of our society that the nullification of our system of self-government that the assassination of a ^President. Writing about that is not a matter of fun and games, or of misusing the means provided by a major publisher willing to spend the money to make a ~~fantastic~~ ^{defective} fantastic international sensation of a deliberately false, ~~defective~~ and misleading account of that most subversive of crimes and of the official investigations in its wake.

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Before proceeding there is another means by which the reader can evaluate Posner's writing, his book and his intent.

Earlier when we discussed the absolute basis for his claim to have personally discovered what ^{he said} was previously entirely unknown, that there was an earlier shot than the Commission acknowledged and his theory—yes, it is only a theory, that the earlier shot is the one that missed, and we saw that he cribbed that from a youth of fifteen and pretended it was his own work, the amount of space he devoted to ^{that} ~~case~~ in his book of more than six hundred pages ^{is} ~~was~~ about half of one page, ^{Page} ~~see~~ Page 321. Contrast that, ~~is~~ the very basis of his theory and his book, with the six pages he devotes to his corruption of the story told by Sylvia Odjo. For that he ^{does} ~~takes~~ six pages, ~~is~~ 175 through 180.

The only reason he requires that much space for Odjo is because at the outset he recognized that his preconceived case ~~required~~ that he destróy her credibility. Because that cannot be done by evidence he does it by selective and misrepresentative quotations ~~and~~ that does take space.

As we shall see, Posner's false case against her builds for those ^e six pages. He concludes them calling her a liar. ~~That~~ This was so much preconceived his course for ^{at the end of his work was in fact} calling her a liar ~~is~~ one of his earliest interviews. It ^{as}, by his own note, Number 56 on page 534, on March 16, that ^{establishes} ~~establishes~~ this for us.

Again, both for the record for our history and, hopefully as I write this, for the readers' understanding, ^{in the media} how many of those who just swooned in ecstasy over Posner's ~~work~~ book were in position to make the evaluation, far from a complete case, in this chapter? How many even knew, if any had wanted to, where such an evaluation might be obtained?

Could any of the unimaginably large number of publications internationally ^{be} in a position to make any independent evaluation of Posner's book when they ^{ad} ~~contract~~ the ancillary rights to it? Beginning with U.S. News and World Report, which made a supersensation of its lengthy excerpting in an issue largely devoted to it and extending to as far away as we can get, to the Queensland, Australia Courier-Mail, a full-size newspaper that devoted the entire front ^{of an inside section} ~~page~~ of its weekend edition of Saturday, September 4 and

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two inside ^{purchased} pages to ancillary rights to Posner's book?

There is no way anyone outside of Random House can know how extensive this use of Posner's untested and untestable word was spread throughout the entire world.

All of the publications that bought the rights to their uses of Posner's book and all those who reported on it and reviewed it did so on faith.

Faith in particular in Random House's reputation.

And Random House had no authentic peer review of the book. The consequences of that also are clear in this chapter in particular

Their trust, the trust of all of us, was imposed upon.

Pointed as this chapter is, it still is only part of ^{Posner} the ~~story~~, a small part of that conscious imposition upon trust, the trust of the entire world.