Mr. Tom Wicker
Austin Hill Farm. Box 361
Rochester, VT 05767

2/6/94

Dear Mr. Wicker,

Your post card of February 3 in response to my letter of December 19 is at least a partial response. But it represents emotion, at least resentment, rather than the kind of thinking I would expect from one with your professional background and experience.

I neither said nor implied that you said other than you believe. I asked you, in addition to "the basis for your making the statements" I quoted to you from the back of the dust jacket "whether you made any effort to check them or anything in the book."

As I told you, I had completed my manuscript before writing you. I also told you that "I begin it with quotations from the dust-jacket blurbs."

As what appears to be an afterthought you wrote in the margin your P.S.," I do not care what you may say about me in some future work. I long ago got used to criticism, and worse."

Yet with regard to his criticisms of me, of which there are ten or twelve in Posner's book, you wrote it "is a deliberate, detailed thoroughly documented, sometimes brutal" work. As I wrote you, his criticisms of me lack sources and he refused to provide them when I asked for them. Thus, without having asked me about them, you endorsed his criticisms of me.

My interest is not in making any personal criticisms. It is in trying to make as accurate a record as is possible of both that tragic event and how then and since then our basic institutions have functioned or failed to function. Yet I do note that when you read what is in the book about me you did not do what I believe you would have expected of every reporter under you when you were the Times Washington bureau chief, ~~asked~~ if I had been asked about them. And despite your career you now tell me with regard to what I asked, "I have nothing to hide, though I don't think you have any right to ask."

On this subject you believe that, would have accepted that in your earlier life?

Particularly after I told you, without any question from you, that Posner's "is the most dishonest book I have ever read"?

Of what Posner and his publisher say about that account of Oswald's life, that it is the "heart" of his book, you say in the blurb, "the "book's most important contribution may be Posner's thorough, dispassionate, yet rather sympathetic account of the warped and miserable life of Lee Harvey Oswald," I asked you, "did you consult what the Commission and its counsel said about that very same thing?" or "what that shrink Hartogs actually said about "Oswald.

As a measure of the total, deliberate dishonesty of Posner's book I tell you what you would have learned if you had checked at all, that all said exactly the opposite of what Posner misuses as the basis of his book. The very quotation that is Posner's basis for what he said is what <u>under oath and to Posner's knowledge</u> ~~Hatogs~~ Hartogs said is not the truth, not what his examination showed. If you had checked the <u>Times</u>' morgue you would also have learned about Hartogs what Posner did not see fit to include in his book, the kind of man, the kind of professional he is: he used his medical practise to get ~~fee~~ free sex and was convicted of it. Convicted may not be the correct word. It was a civil suit, and he paid for his sex that way.

You asked me not a single question when I told you it is the most dishonest book I have ever read - and it is this in ~~whay~~ ways other that his misuse of Hartogs with regard to Oswald's life, particularly whether he was all alone - yet you now say, " I stand by what I said about <u>Case Closed</u>."

If that is the way you want it, that is the way it will be.

I amplify the preceding paragraph to illustrate the deliberateness of Posner's dishonesty. In his book he says that Oswald, using the name Lee Osborne, picked up the handbills he distributed from the Jones Printing Company in New Orleans. He cites a Commission exhibit, an FBI report, for the content of that handbill. But that very report says that it was not Oswald who picked those handbills up. After reading that and another FBI report Posner does not cite I did what he did not do in all those 200 interviews that I presume impressed you, I interviewed both Jones and his assistant. Both were quite firm in saying it was not Oswald and both, independently, picked out of about 100 pictures I showed them several of the same man. But without this, Posner knew the truth from the report, the exhibit he cited for other and unnecessary purposes.

All of those interviews, by the way, were for the purpose of avoiding what the official evidence says and means. Not a single one of them brings to light what is both factual and new, either.

When I began what I wrote my purpose was to make a record for our history. I had no agent and no publisher. When a friend in publishing learned about it, he offered to publish it. I wanted to return to what I was working on when Posner's book appeared, to leave that record for our history. So, instead of editing the manuscript myself I told this friend to do that. He will publish considerably less than I wrote, more than 200,000 words, perhaps closer to 250,000. That is how dishonest Posner's book is and, with the attention to it Random House was able to arrange for, with a little help from you, that is what I regard as its importance in our history. In time you will be able to see for yourself enough of the intended dishonesty of that to me despicable exploitation and commercialization of a great national tragedy. I am confident you can also see then that when I referred to Posner's plagiarism, that without that and without his misuse of Hartogs that impressed you so much he would not have had any book at all.

I will write nothing further for the book and unless there is a controversy after it appears in which it is pertinent, I expect no further comment about what I wrote you about and your response. All that is not published will remain a record for our history, a record we have no way of knowing will or will not be consulted in the future.

I prefer to believe, as I indicated to you, that your trust was imposed upon. I can understand this with Random House your publisher. I can also understand this more with Wise, who reportedly is working on a book about Oswald for Random House. But I am sorry for you that you did not do what as a reporter you surely would have done, made any check at all, asked any questions of anyone.

For your information and relating to what you wrote about what Posner wrote about Oswald, Wise's book has a competitor. I have given that author the official proof I did not have when from a former Marine mate I learned and in 1967 published that Oswald as a Marine had an exceptionally high security clearance. Posner had and quoted from that book of mine. But he did not refer to this high security clearance and he asked me nothing about it when he spent three days here or in our later correspondence or phone conversations.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

Dear Mr. Weisberg: 2/3

I said what I said about Case Closed because I thought it was true, and I still do. I gave the comment when asked for it by the publisher, who sent me the ms. I tell you that because I have nothing to hide, though I don't think you have any right to ask. In general, I'm sorry you feel as you do but I stand by what I said about Case Closed.

Sincerely ... Tom Wicker

P.S. I don't care what you may say about me in some future work. I long ago got used to criticism, and worse.