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Mr. Michael Mooney  
The Saturday Evening Post  
641 Lexington Avenue  
New York, N.Y.

Dear Mike,

Reading William Manchester's introduction to the forthcoming \$3,000,000.00 bomb this morning I suddenly found a modesty equal to his. It makes me wonder if I might "Speak Out" on this "one complete, accurate account", where we will find sermons in curbstones and pavements and the solution to the crime of the century "over the ambulance route to Bethesda Naval Hospital".

His logic is overwhelming: "Because I have been at this task longer than anyone, I have not only felt entitled to record my opinions (how great and generous is Allah!), I have the inescapable obligation to do so."

His modesty is equalled by only his generosity and common touch: "It was essential that the new President know what I proposed to do." Nothing highhat or in the slightest undemocratic. The President is as good as anybody else, and as equal. Only not in his stomach, apparently, for having "thrust his memories into a remote corner of his mind" like so many others he found "bringing them out was almost unendurable." That is, "Twice, in May, 1964 and April, 1965" when he had agreed to "receive" Manchester "and go through everything. Then he found he could not do it." Again, not quite. What the President found "unendurable" in person he managed to survive without personal contact: "He ultimately solved the ~~xxxxxxx~~ dilemma by written questions and written answers".

Do not underestimate the powers of this great man. Whaley took the Commission to not fewer than two different curbstones on which at a series of different times he deposited Oswald. Once Manchester is in the case, Whaley was able to have "dropped me off at the same curb". Manchester can resolve all problems. The Commission found it took Oswald almost a half hour to make the few blocks to the theater, where he allegedly arrived disheveled, showing the signs of his rush. Manchester is the great simplifier: "I darted over the last lap of Oswald's flight!."

He was determined to get all the facts of the assassination: "I even had the damaged Dallas-Bethesda coffin uncreated for inspection, and I have visited the hillside below Custis-Lee Mansion in every season".

This is appropriate, for Manchester is himself a man for every season. Not only need the new President "know what I proposed to do", but "It was equally imperative that the Commission which the Chief Justice headed understand the exact nature of my inquiry." The Chief Justice, infinitely wise and no doubt humbled by the presence in which he found himself, "was unfeigningly polite and recognized that while the lines of the two investigations might occasionally intersect, they certainly did not run parallel. The Commission was conducting a criminal probe. I was exploring the full

sweep of events..." What is lacking here is the ego of a Sherlock Holmes, for some of the Manchester subtleties (studying the pavements of Washington between the airport and the hospital, the cemetery hillside and the temporary casket ) rubbed off on the Chief Justice, whose staff examined the pubic hairs from Oswald's blanket and, by comparing them with pubic hairs pulled from the still-living <sup>blanket</sup> ~~blanket~~, proved Oswald's blanket was indeed Oswald's blanket.

We find our unassuming hero properly impressed with the words "wise" and "wisdom", especially as they relate to him. The bereaved family was "wise" for agreeing with the widow "to have a book written by an author whom the President had known (?) and in whom he had expressed confidence". Real humility ultimate emerges: "Research, of course, is no substitute for wisdom". Own research: "...I know more about it than anyone else." On perspective, "In time, I myself shall merely become a source for future historians as yet unborn (overtones of Gray's Elegy). Yet it was imperative that this chronicle be laid before the generation of Americans who suffered through those days."

All, of this seeped in, says this man who knows more than anyone else (his own reluctant confession) while "I sat where the assassin had sat" (ESP?) or just a sensitive ass?) "in Oswald's sixth-floor perch".

So now we know. Now we have the unofficial whitewash. His great and humble man has wrenched two years from his life to bestow this benediction upon us, for the pittance of \$3,000,000.00 that is involved.

That generation of Americans "who suffered through those days" will not suffer through more. My proposal to you is to focus the suffering on fewer. I have a little file on Manchester ("Oswald is a minor figure"; "I have more fresh material" than in all 25 volumes; the Commission met its most important responsibilities either "superbly" or "magnificently") and I have a certain relationship with LOOK, to which I submitted part of my new book relating to it and Knebel in advance, only to have them lose it and for it to stay lost until I really pressed for its return. I'm still waiting for an explanation of how to Knebel I am a "lurid and irresponsible writer".

Before buying the Manchester rights, LOOK had in its possession irrefutable proof its basic conclusions were wrong. This may be too tender for you. It is not for me.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

P.S. I've challenged Merriman Smith to a debate before the National Press Club on his Sunday piece, my book, the work of the Commission or any combination of his choosing. He is the one man who does not know where he was when the President was killed. It is for this writing that he won the Pulitzer Prize.