

Merriman Smith 11/13/66 (about me and WHITEWASH): On the first page he is wrong about the weather on the day of the assassination and wrong about the makeup of the ~~motorcade~~ Kennedy motorcade in Dallas. With this for openers, it becomes difficult of accepting some of Weisberg's other material as gospel". Thus Smith manages to excuse to himself at least his ignoring of 100% of it.

What I said of the weather is precisely correct. It had rained before the President awakened in Fort Worth and "The rain ended and the sun broke through in Dallas just before the arrival of the Presidential party at Love Field". The Report (p.42) says "In Dallas the rain had stopped, and by midmorning the gloomy overcast sky had given way to the bright sunshine that greeted the Presidential party when Air Force One touched down at Love Field at 11:40 a.m., c.s.t." One wonders which Merriman Smith, if any, was in Dallas to win the Pulitzer Prize.

On the organization of the motorcade he had much more to say in his story, which bases its assault upon me and his defense of the Commission and his learned dissertation on rifles and marksmanship in which he quotes still another Merriman Smith as authority upon his statement of the organization of the motorcade and where he was, saw, knows and remembers. The value of his offered oath also comes into question, as does the value of anything he says:

~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ "I was only a few hundred feet (also given as five car lengths and 150 to 200 yards by the same Merriman Smith) from John F. Kennedy when he was shot in Dallas. I would swear that there were three shots and only three shots fired at his motorcade. The car in which I rode as a press association reporter was not far from the Presidential vehicle itself, and in clear view of it. We were at the point of coming out of an underpass when the first shot was fired...As we cleared the underpass then came the second and third shots. The shots were fired smoothly and evenly. There was not the slightest doubt on the front seat of our car that the shots came from a rifle to our rear (And the book depository at this point was directly to our rear)." Then, with inverse periscopic vision, Smith saw back under the underpass - a very large one, not a single one but, as the name he avoids indicates, a triple underpass, and up the fairly steep hill a matter of several hundred feet (after this remarkable curving vision of his cleared the concrete abstractions in its way) and saw the President "slide from view in the rear" of his car.

Three days after my letter pointing out the invincible inaccuracy of Smith's writing reached the editor of the Washington Post he printed not my letter but one from Smith claiming "a number of readers seems concerned" about his error. It appears, although it is not fully admitted, that the professional news agency, UPI, ~~xxxxxx~~ distributed and its Pulitzer Prize-winning White House correspondent submitted a "rough draft". Smith quotes this language alone from his article, "We were at the point of coming out of an underpass when the first shot was fired." Of this he says, "Here was a case of my trusting memory rather than looking up my own records for that day." And, he says, "we spotted the error and some time prior to the scheduled publication date sent a correction which changed this paragraph to read, 'We were at the point of turning from Houston Street into Elm Street when the first shot was fired". That is all.

What about seeing around the corner of Houston into Elm and then back in a greater than 90 degree angle to see the President "slide from view"? This corner was jammed with people and structured with concrete walls, pylons and other decorations, landscaped with bushes and trees, and the President was also downhill and separated from Smith's magical vision by nontransparent cars stuffed with nontransparent people. What about the TSBD "directly to our rear", when it was in front of him because, as he now admits, he had not yet reached it? How about those three so evenly-spaced shots, which were not that he so clearly recognized as also "came from

a rifle to our rear? One of the places to his "rear" ~~is~~, his real rear, that is, is the sheriff's office. Another is the U.S. Post Office, housing the U.S. Attorney's office. If the shots came from the rear, they could not have been fired by Oswald or anyone else in the TSBD.

With this slight and minor confession of a seemingly slight error Smith seeks to avoid the all-pervading error of his story and all the major part of it built on his ~~fact~~ wrong recollection, the basis of his attack on my book and me. That he did not withdraw. The nature of his pretended correction is a further dishonesty.

The correction was sent out, as Smith says. But it did not correct his slanders or his errors. While the Dallas Times Herald did use the correction the Dallas Morning News did not. It did not withdraw the false accusations made against me and the damage done my book which were based on just these errors by Smith, errors for which there can be no excuse in a professional writer or a man who has the slightest familiarity with the subject matter of which he wrote. Smith, despite his Pulitzer Prize, is the one man in the world with a faulty recollection of where he was when he learned of the assassination - and Smith was there!

UPI has not printed a retraction, has not answered my letter pointing out the factual error, and Smith has merely declined my offer to debate him at the National Press Club, before his peers, his territory, on either his story, my book, the work of the Commission, or any combination of his choosing. He isn't a debater, he says. He also failed to answer my challenge to debate him on his story in what is undoubtedly his field, attested to by his position and his prizes, writing. I offered to let him arrange for the periodical, offered further to submit my criticism of him to him in advance so he could use all of his space in answering me. He is without response.