



# THE SUNDAY TIMES

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30th December 1967

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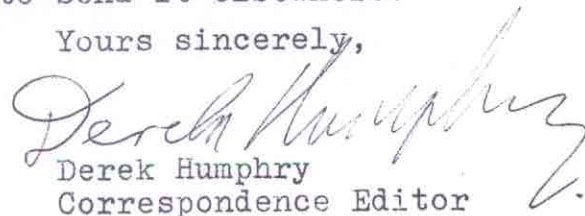
Dear Mr Weisberg,

Thank you for your letter.

We have not the slightest idea to what your letter refers. We have not published any articles by Mr Sparrow since December 1964.

As you seem to be mistaken I am returning your letter in case you wish to send it elsewhere.

Yours sincerely,

  
Derek Humphry  
Correspondence Editor

Encl.

TIMES NEWSPAPERS LIMITED

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New address: Route 7  
Frederick, Md. 21701  
USA

December 23, 1967

The Editor  
London Sunday Times  
London, England

Sir:

When offered genuine news of the Kennedy assassination, British papers are wont to say, in one manner or another, "Oh, there is no interest in that over here any more." Offered a piece of professional sycophancy, like your half-book length apologia for what is inexcusable by the eminent warden of All Saints, Mr. Sparrow, you grab at it.

Depending on the respected barrister for fact or opinion about the assassination or its investigation is like reading books instead of marrying. You just do not get the real thing.

In his criticism of me, which seems to be in part that I pretend neither to solve the crime nor to be James Bond, he is at least consistent. I am informed that in the summer of 1965 he was asked for a legal reading of my first book, WHITEWASH: THE REPORT ON THE WARREN REPORT, by a major British publisher who had tentatively favored it. He seems to have recommended against it on the ground that it was not favorable to the Warren Commission!

Those who have had access to your "literary supplement" say this noble upholder of the law (British, at least) complains that all I do is show the Warren Commission was wrong. If this is his charge, I plead "guilty". I am sufficiently old-fashioned to believe rather deeply that when an American President is gunned down in broad daylight in the streets of an American city and that murder is officially investigated by the government thus brought into power, there may remain no questions unasked and none unanswered that are within the capacity of man to answer. I further believe that when a murdered American President is consigned to history with the dubious epitaph of what can at best be considered a questionable inquest, no President is ever safe and the institution, like all the others of a democracy, is thenceforth in jeopardy.

If he shows no major mistakes in my writing (and my evidence is 100% that of the Commission) and cannot show that those errors I attribute to the Commission are not errors, on what basis, then, does this embodiment of the Queen's law assail me (aside from a pretended kindness which rings as true as the word "love" in the mouth of a whore)?

Apparently on the basis of profound ignorance. Here, too, he is not alone. A year ago, our own American eminences commemorated the assassination's third anniversary by demanding to be heard and believed while beginning their statements with variants of "I don't know what

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I am talking about, but ..." Beginning with Texas Governor John B. Connally, each proclaimed his ignorance by bragging that he had not read a single one of the books he assailed. These included such personages as a former Presidential press secretary, Malcolm Kilduff, whose performance was soon to be exceeded by another, Pierre Salinger, whose undying contribution to freedom of the press was a foreword to the literary lickspittlery of Newsweek's Charles Roberts in which Salinger demanded that criticism of government not be heard - in effect, suppressed.

Accompanying these ringing affirmations of man's freedom was a campaign of equal integrity in which those who wrote critically of the government were labeled "scavengers", the governor's felicitous phrase. To labor for several years without profit or even income (with the not inconsiderable aid of the warden) somehow became reprehensible.

What was not disgusting or in any way repugnant was the profitable writing supporting the official version or by those made famous by the assassination. It was honorable for Congressman Gerald Ford, paid to perform public service as a member of the Commission, to affix his name to a book written by another and to include in it Warren Commission material not found in the Report. He was likewise not to be faulted for signing, if not writing, private "Warren Reports" for Life magazine, reputedly the highest-paying American publication.

When Mr. Sparrow's American counterpart, Louis Nizer, a world-famous lawyer, wrote a glowing glorification of the Warren Report for a commercial edition of it when the "evidence" was still unavailable, he performed a "public service" and was not criticized.

The governor himself, if not paid cash, reaped the rich political harvest of favorable exposure in millions of its glossy pages and more countless millions of newspapers which reprinted from Life. Certainly this was not "scavenging", for did not the governor say the Report he proved wrong was indeed right?

Need I mention those many others who became rich, famous or both only because of their associations with the murdered President or because of that foul deed? Like the nanny of the children, his former secretary, or Salinger, Theodore Sorensen and Arthur Schlesinger? How could these pure and unmercenary souls, greatly enriched as they were by the assassination, be thought to have financial gain in mind when they were entirely uncritical of the "investigation" of the murder that did enrich them?

The overnight millionaire, William Manchester, is in a different class. When he wrought an additional tragedy, still further a needless scandal, for which, to begin with only, he received \$665,000 from Look alone, the description "scavenger" is hardly appropriate.

(I do hope it is not improper to wonder if the All Souls warden gets nothing but a heavenly reward for his own well-publicized writings.)

In any event, based firmly on bias and buttressed by ignorance, Mr. Sparrow defames me. I know, I can assure you, that he has seen my first book. What I do not know is that he has read the three that

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followed, none of which has been published in England. He has not ordered these from me. Here I accuse him of neither unwisdom nor inconsistency, for he can better criticize what he does not know than he can answer it, as long as he need not face the author. And thus he need not concern himself with the enormous suppressions by the Commission as I have brought them to light from my personal and exhaustive examination of its files (that is, if anyone can be said to exhaust the estimated 300 cubic feet of them).

So, you add your prestige and circulation to his considerable reputation (how it was earned now seems no secret) and initiate another slander of those who seek truth. Your and his defamations, which have no foundation in either fact or integrity of opinion or purpose, have now been widely syndicated throughout at least the English-speaking world. Is it not now past time for you to give me the opportunity to respond? Or do you believe I should be as defenseless as the Warren Commission rendered the safely-dead Oswald in denying counsel to show the other side, to test its "evidence" with cross-examination?

Of course, there is no need for a night-sneak to risk face-to-face confrontation, and he is perhaps wiser and more successful - and less likely to be hurt - if he avoids it.

Yet we do, as we have from the first, urgently need a genuine dialogue on this subject, you and we. You are not immune to what affects the United States, its institutions and its government.

There is no end to the unchanjy monologue of the warden, but dare he risk a dialogue? a confrontation? Dare he test his opinions, defamatory as they are, and the presumed "fact" upon which he should base them, to the face of one who says he does not know what he is talking about? I challenge him to that test.

Although I am but a humble writer (and I am, in both finances and station) and he is one of the world's famous, a man renowned in the law, I would welcome his arranging a public forum in your country and my attendance upon it with him, open to his peers who might want to ask questions or observe the abundant demonstration of his skill and knowledge, to the press and the general public.

As the challenger, I grant him the choice. We could discuss his writing, on which, without doubt, he is the world's outstanding expert; mine, of which he wants you to believe so little! or any combination of his election.

Should it, to my regret, not be possible for such a personal debate to take place, there are always your columns, and you, he, or the two of you jointly, could exercise his prerogatives.

Should he decline my challenge, he and I, at least, will have measured each other. And should you let it rest thus, you and I will understand each other, will both know the basis for the words printed in the Sunday Times.

England has a long and honorable tradition regarding questions of principle and the establishment of honor between men. If I require a "second", I nominate my long-suffering agent, Mr. Gordon Harbord, 53 St. Martin's Lane, London W.C. 2.

I attend you, gentlemen!

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

XXXXXX 473-8186

New address: Route 7  
Frederick, Md. 21701  
January 4, 1968

Editor, The Times Literary Supplement  
Printing House Square  
London, EC 4, ENGLAND

Sir:

Apparently your publication, which is well known in the United States, achieves so little attention in London that the Correspondence Editor of the Sunday Times is both unaware of you and the publicity attendant upon your recent publication of Mr. John Sparrow. My letter to you somehow reached him. He returned it with this comment: "We have not the slightest idea to what your letter refers." With perhaps unreasoning hope, when I consider the character of some of the mail services from which I have benefited in your country and my own, I send it here-with again.

Since writing it, I note the January 2 dispatch from London by Anthony Lewis to the New York Times. Is it not remarkable that, even prior to its publication, the comment of Mr. John P. Roche, whose credentials include the most profound ignorance of the fact of the Kennedy assassination and its official investigation, is worth major news attention?

Or can this be because Mr. Roche suddenly appears in the role of a White House spokesman seemingly defending Senator Robert Kennedy? How nice it is of the President to spring to the "defense" of the brother of the late President, particularly when the papers would have us believe they are not political friends.

The living Mr. Kennedy will be fortunate to survive such acts of "friendship".

Unknown to your readers - for the great scholarship of Mr. Sparrow denied them knowledge of the three books I published after WHITEWASH: THE REPORT ON THE WARREN REPORT (and your knowledge of things literary did not correct his rather revealing "error") - I address "friendship" of this character in the Epilogue to WHITEWASH II. While I did not then have these intellectual giants, Messrs. Sparrow and Roche, in mind, I consider that more than a year after its publication that opinion, addressed to them, is apt. On page 230 I say, "The late President had such friends he had no need for enemies. Caesar's 'friends' had more honor. They worked in the open."

While I am forced to wonder about the intent of a publication that permits Mr. Roche such labels as calling those of us who have done the work he failed to do "marginal paranoids", and certainly I cannot by this be encouraged to the belief that you are impartial or determined to be factual and fair, I nonetheless suggest to you that reason should refute the pretension of understanding and knowledge by Mr. Roche.

His credentials are those of a "scholar" and a paid apologist for Mr. Johnson. It is Mr. Johnson, the first beneficiary of the assassination, who is personally responsible for the continuing and unjustifiable suppressions of the most basic evidence of the assassination (Mr. Sparrow's

ignorance of my published writing makes it possible for him to ignore my published specification of this, chapter and verse).

When society most required their leadership, those customarily considered "intellectuals" abdicated their responsibilities, without exception. As the head of the "liberal" group, Americans for Democratic Action, as an intellectual leader, Mr. Roche is preeminent among those who failed their society when it so urgently needed them. To this day he has not done what he should have learned in the lower schools and what he, with his current university responsibilities (let us hope!) teaches students: Know what you are talking about before you open your mouth. I marvel at how many big feet he can stuff into his.

Presented as though it is "logic", a common substitute for fact in comment on this case by "intellectuals", Mr. Roche says, "Any fair analysis of Senator Kennedy's abilities, his character and the resources at his disposal as Attorney General, would indicate that if there was a conspiracy he would have pursued its protagonists to the ends of the earth."

Persuasive? Yes. Honest? No. Factual and pertinent? No.

The question is not at all one of the Senator's abilities, character or resources but what he did and what he said. Again, their ignorance is a shield, and the Roches, Sparrows and their intellectual bedmates totally ignore the public record and my comment on it in an appropriate analysis (epilogue, WHITEWASH II: THE FBI-SECRET SERVICE COVER-UP; introduction, PHOTOGRAPHIC WHITEWASH: SUPPRESSED KENNEDY ASSASSINATION PICTURES).

Had these men who trade on their reputations for the retailing and accepting of propaganda and untruth spent a tiny fraction of the time I<sup>4</sup> have in dredging that historical and literary swamp, the late Commission's files, they'd have known that, from the thousands upon thousands of documents I have examined (and I thereby presume this to be entirely true), not a single one - no report, comment or suggestion to the Warren Commission from the Department of Justice - bears his name!

Were they even slightly familiar with the testimony of Mr. J. Edgar Hoover, head of the FBI, which did the (dirty) work, they'd know the truth. If I cannot expect them to have read the book and the author about whom they are so without reserve in their slanders (WHITEWASH II, p.223), is it asking too much that they be familiar with Mr. Hoover's testimony, on pages 98-9 of volume 5 of the hearings? It reads,

I have read all the requests that come to the Bureau from the Commission, and I have read and signed all the replies that have come (sic) to the Commission. In addition, I have read many of the reports that our agents have made ... I myself go over these to see that we haven't missed anything or haven't had any gap in the investigation ...

In short, what Hoover did, and what he swore he did, was run the actual investigation. He, not the then Attorney General, was the "boss".

It can be argued that Mr. Kennedy, as Attorney General, had the ultimate responsibility in the Department of Justice. But at the same time I express a gratitude for his total disassociation from the conduct of the investigation. Had he not - as he certainly had every reason to - trusted those under him, there today would be an additional question that does not exist: Was the official investigation motivated and controlled by a vindictive spirit?

However, it is not as though Mr. Kennedy has been silent. He has not changed or retracted his initial comment: That he had not read the Warren Report or any of the writing about it, and that he did not intend to, finding the matter much too painful. He believed it, believing on the basis of trust.

One may consider that as the brother he may have behaved and believed otherwise, but is there any reason to presume Mr. Robert Kennedy lied? He has said he has no personal knowledge of the investigation.

How, then, are we to take Mr. Roche's uninhibited outpouring of passion: "... every one of the plot theories must rely on the inconceivable connivance" of the Senator?

I suggest we consider Mr. Roche the point of Mr. Johnson's stiletto.

It is the man for whom Mr. Roche is lackey who has and had the ultimate responsibility for all of the investigation; who appointed a majority of political opponents of the late President to the Commission (and not a single one of his political friends); who included among them a majority of the greatest friends of the CIA, whose involvement in the assassination is today beyond question and at the time of the appointments was a very obvious suspicion; and who today suppresses what cannot be suppressed, legally or morally.

May I offer you this comment, concluding a discussion of the role and responsibility of the President? It was denied you by the consummate "scholarship" of Messrs. Sparrow and Roche. It is from PHOTOGRAPHIC WHITEWASH (p.9), at the end of a passage in which I point out that increasingly people articulate the (shocking) belief that in some way Mr. Johnson was involved in the assassination: "No matter how pure his motive, no matter how humble his gathering of faggots (if it is humble he is), they stoke a witch's cauldron and he is thought Macbeth."

In the guise of defending him, what Mr. Roche has done is to seek to transfer to Mr. Robert Kennedy those responsibilities and abdications that are exclusively the President's. Particularly because of his service to the President is this a gruesome treachery.

At some point Mr. Johnson is going to have to take his thinking out of the hands of the Department of Dirty Tricks. They, as with Mr. Eisenhower and the Powers U-2 flight and many similar fiascos, are interested in themselves only. They have no concern for Mr. Johnson's reputation, now or in history. They are concerned about only their own perpetuation. Every one of these dirty tricks, as with the "leaking" of what is alleged to be Jim Garrison's Army medical record, backfired. We are now to believe that the Jim Garrison that the Army rapidly promoted from captain to lieutenant-colonel was so honored because he was "unfit"! Every one of these libels and sneak attacks makes more people ask aloud if Mr. Johnson was responsible for the assassination. Every one is of official, if hidden, origin. This one traces to the CIA.

If you will not, may Heaven protect Senator Kennedy from his "friends".

I renew my challenge to Mr. Sparrow for a confrontation on fact, now awarding him the questionable assistance and collaboration of Mr. Roche.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

P.S. Should you desire to publish parts of this, you may abbreviate it as you deem necessary.