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New address: Route 7
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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 herewith 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 I⁴ 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.