Letters to the Editor

SPECTER RAPPED

Sir: The 2/22/71 issue of the Daily Pennsylvanian carried an article describing Arlen Specter's appearance at the C.A. "Lunch Rap," including, among others, a question pertaining to Mr. Specter's performance as a staff lawyer for the Warren Commission. As the student who posed this question, I was particularly dismayed that the paraphrases included in the article did not convey the essence of my question or, for that matter, the obvious fact that Mr. Specter never responded.

If, as the article indicated, it was thought that my "charge" was only of Mr. Specter's "negligence," it would seem my question was not understood. Mr. Specter was told by the chief autopsy surgeon at the Kennedy autopsy (Dr. Humes) that the first written draft of the autopsy report (not a "draft card" as the article asserts) was destroyed by burning. Specter never asked the one essential question: "Why?" Yet, he later told a leading news magazine that Dr. Humes had fully explained why he burned the original written autopsy report after revising it. This is a falsehood known best to none other than Arlen Specter for it was he who "neglected" to ask for an explanation of that suspicion evoking burning.

My question was two-fold: Why had Specter never asked for an explanation of the burning and why did he later imply (falsely) that he had?

You might have included the fact that Mr. Specter first declined to answer my question altogether until forced to do so by numerous shouts of protest from the audience.

Although Specter did, as the article says, reply "that he had been satisfied with the doctor's testimony," I must point out that this answers neither part of my question. I pointed this out to Specter at least twice, stressing that he still had not told me WHY he never asked for an explanation or WHY he falsely indicated he had to the press. Finally, Specter dropped the entire question.

If you would look into the record of Specter's performance for the Warren Commission contrasted with what he has told the press about it, you would find (as I have through four years of research) that he is, at best, consistent in never telling the truth or the whole truth. My question was but one example.

I believe we must seriously question the integrity of public officials with such a record. At least we must not allow them to escape severely critical questions pertaining to that record so they may possibly defend themselves or correct the record. This has been my attitude toward Mr. Specter, with whom I have spoken on other occasions.

However, I felt it important that your readers know, as they could not from the article, a little about the nature of Mr. Specter's work for the Warren Commission and how he "answers" questions about it today.

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