

8/22/70

Dear Mr. Berkeley,

Your letter of August 18 proves one of the points I was trying to make to you. If you have to be told why Dick's article is what I called it, "terrible, irresponsible and damaging", you lack the knowledge required for any responsible publishing in this field. I suspect others have been specific to you, for I know they are not secretive about this and I have yet to get a single contrary opinion from anyone doing serious work or with solid knowledge. I simply haven't the time, for I do the original work others lift, to indulge their egos, quiet their frustrations or other purpose that seem important to them.

This has nothing to do with whether you or Dick are decent men, whether or not your motives are good, as I did explain. It has to do with only the end product and its consequences. I described that accurately. Only those whose ignorance or self-deception should keep them silent can dispute this. This is an enormous field, and any responsible writing or publishing now requires exhaustive work that few can find the time for.

Sylvia, too, is unselfish and of noblest motive. I doubt she discovered the Milster material on her own. If she did, she also did what is not like her, neglected to call it to my attention, knowing that I had written on it. So, if my deductions are correct, this is the continued retailing of unoriginal work, which is reprehensible in any kind of writing. There is a vast difference in having material for understanding and further inquiry and for self-seeking publication, which not only adds nothing but is inadequate and incomplete. There is much worse of this in your stuff, but I hesitate to be specific fearing the potential of your end Spregue carrying it further forward in this manner and converting the unlikely into the impossible as it relates to further investigation, which neither of you will do with it as I did do to begin with. In that particular case, I checked with the only other person having a copy and he tells me he did not give it to Dick. Which means that it was taken, not given. And it is very important, not an item for mishandling or inadequate waste, out-of-context treatment for a very small audience.

I have learned that our friends are our worst enemies, and I have tried to live with it. But there is a simple thing that every editor knows: he publishes original work or credits the source, with permission only. What you published was not of this character and it has a seriously adverse effect, the most comprehensible way being in taking the edge off of what is to come.

Is it not past the time where we indulge frustrations, convert wishes into pretended facts, cease a variation on the theme by Warren? Can you not realize how such writing is utterly ruinous to everyone's credibility, as with "about six confessions" where there is no probative one and no logical reason for accepting any as likely except from the irrational? I just don't see how even an ignorant editor could have read Dick's piece without the deepest misgivings, except that he was blinded by good desires and captive of wishful thinking, as is Dick, for all his really very good intentions....I can't stop you from doing what you seem determined to do, nor can I undo the harm you have done. But I can charge you with your responsibilities, which, clearly, you cannot have thought through, and with their consequences. I do not think that either you or Dick want to hurt. I also tell you you have. You can believe me or not. I certainly do not dare explain how, with this record in print and the apparent attitude to publish any scrap that can be seized from whatever source, for I assume the same thing would follow and I would share this guilt...You give the corrupt media all the self-justification they need for their suppression when you print garbage and other people's materials that you do not understand and present inadequately at best. With deep dismay, Harold Weisberg

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Sylvia, too, is unselfish and of noblest motive. I doubt she discovered the Milteer material on her own. If she did, she also did what is not like her, neglected to call it to my attention, knowing that I had written on it. So, if my deductions are correct, this is the continued retelling of unoriginal work, which is reprehensible in any kind of writing. There is a vast difference in having material for understanding and further inquiry and for self-seeking publication, which not only adds nothing but is inadequate and incomplete. There is much worse of this in your stuff, but I hesitate to be specific fearing the potential of your and Sprague carrying it farther forward in this manner and converting the unlikely into the impossible as it relates to further investigation, which neither of you will do with it if I did so to begin with. In that particular case, I checked with the only other person having a copy and he tells me he did not give it to Dick. Which means that it was taken, not given. And it is very important, not an item for mishandling or inadequate waste, out-of-context treatment for a very small audience.

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August 18, 1970

Mr. Harold Weisberg
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Route 8
Frederick, MD 21701

Dear Mr. Weisberg,

Thank you for your letter of August 12.

I really do not know how to respond to your letter.

1. You call the May article by Dick Sprague "terrible, irresponsible, and damaging". But you give no specifics.
2. You say in your second article I use material I have no right to use. I cannot imagine why. Sylvia Meagher was the researcher who told Dick Sprague about the Milteer piece in the archives. You do not identify the material "I have no right to use." I have no way of answering that protest either.
3. You say I do not have "the knowledge required for what I so lustily attempt." Here again you give no specifics. How can I answer that?

If you said specifically for example, that Oswald was in the 6th floor easternmost window of the TSBD in the period of time between 5 seconds before the first shot and 3 seconds after the last shot, I would know how to answer that.

In the absence of specifics, I have no way of answering you or of publishing corrections. I'm stymied.

Yours sincerely,



Edmund C. Berkeley
Editor

ECB/lbl