

Mr. Nat Elfin, Editor, Special Projects
U.S. News
2400 N St., NW
Washington, DC 20037

8/13/92

Dear Mr. Elfin,

After reading your 8/17/92 "Special Report" that takes up virtually the entire cover with the blood-red "JFK" followed by "The Untold Story of the Warren Commission," I wondered who could have sired such a frighteningly ugly bastard. You edit special projects, this surely is a "special" report, so I assume you. If not, will you please route this to the man who had so little personal and professional self respect that he would hippodrome his regurgitation of the ancient and soured cud as "the untold story" and whose concept of responsible journalism is to tell your readers that the Warren report was correct because its staff says it was correct and whose personal and professional integrity demanded that no independent authority be consulted.

With no reason to believe that those who would publish such a spectacularly dishonest abandonment of traditional journalistic standards could have any interest in a detailed commentary on it I do not provide such a commentary. However, I do tell you that you(pl) lied, distorted, misrepresented and used as your exclusive sources those who failed the nation in that time of great stress and ever since.

What did you expect them to say other than that black is white, up is down? Did you expect them to condemn themselves and to boast of their failures?

You (again pl) invest your personal and professional reputations on this? Without concern, without shame?

My work has never been the pursuit of any assassination whodunit. In my seven books there is not a single conspiracy theory. I have in fact been the not infrequently credited source of stories debunking them in papers you read, including the NY Times and the Wx Post and the ^{perhaps} St. Louis Post-Dispatch. Journalistic indifference to factuality and accuracy in my books on the JFK assassination and its official investigations led to the thrust of my work, as I am certain your wife's colleague, who knows it and me very well will tell her and you, into an indepth study of the functioning and non-functioning of the basic institutions of our society in that time of great stress and ever since. The press in all its forms is in a society like ours one of these basic institutions. It failed us then and it fails us now in this disgraceful, self-characterizing "special report."

So, the whoring press whoring and serious illnesses further limiting what I can do, I serve the role of making a record for history, whether or not it is ever consulted, as I believe in the future it may well be. And in this sense I welcome the to me astounding dishonesty and sycophancy of this "special report" that ranges from what would not be

accepted from a reasonably intelligent high-school student to what would make a failure of a college thesis.

What you (pl) evolved and so shamelessly published is so obviously bad and faulted it is not necessary for me to write ^{anything} ~~anything~~ about it for those who in the future may be interested in how the press functions ^{ed} and malfunctioned after its disgraceful failure when the President was assassinated. My highlighting will be adequate for those who know ^{how} anything at all about the established and unquestionable fact of the assassination and its investigations.

While there is no reason to believe that those who would vest their reputations on so wretchedly terrible an article could have any interest in the truth if not also in learning how their trust was imposed upon by their sources, from this highlighting and memory that is not as good at 70 as it once was I am quite prepared to document what I say herein and for it to be tape-recorded.

As an example of imposed-upon trust, where you say that Bobby Kennedy denied the Commission the use of the autopsy film, you cite Arlen Specter's memo saying that consideration of this film was essential. I published that memo years ago. Along with one about which either he did not tell you or you suppressed, another of his memos in which, consistent with his career of covering his own ass, he told the Commission that Bobby had ~~said~~ said that it could have and use anything it needed, including this.

And I also published years ago an/in facsimile the page of a Warren Commission executive session transcript - classified "TOP Secret" by the Commission that lacked any authority to classify anything - in which Rankin told McCloy that they in fact had those pictures. (enclosed)

You say that at his 1/20/64 meeting with the staff Warren told them that "truth is our only client." There were two staff memos on that meeting. Neither says this. But what may interest you is that Warren told the staff he took the job because if he did not there might be "40 million lives" lost, a rather original way of saying there was no conspiracy, and that Howard Willens omitted this in his bobtailed account of that session. (also enclosed. The previous page is the second of a phony transcript Rankin prepared of the session Russell forced so he could record his disagreement with the single-bullet theory. When I put that along with the Archives written statement there is no other transcript ^{of that session} ~~in Russell's hands~~ Russell's hands he encouraged my work until his dying day, expressing regret he could not do anything to help me.)

Truth, alas, was neither the Commission's client nor yours.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

Harold Weisberg