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October 5, 1966

cc Paul Noble, Gordon Herbert

Mr. Loudon Wainright
LIFE Magazine
New York City, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Wainright,

Your editorial in the coming issue of LIFE, described to me over the phone but to be denied me until the end of the week as a consequence of country living, seems so important that I can almost forget that it forgot my book, WHITENASH: THE REPORT ON THE WARREN REPORT, which was first written (completed February 1965), first published (August 1965) and is still by far the most complete on the subject.

It is indeed important that you and your publication say the Warren Report is not enough. The explicit conclusion of WHITENASH is that the job has not been done and must be, entirely in public and preferably by Congress, the only book to so conclude. To warrant this conclusion, it was necessary to disprove each of the major conclusions of the Report. Again, my book was alone to do this, and entirely with on what is in the Commission's record. Suffering the curse of the first, it had to be a private edition, which, despite its phenomenal sale of over 13,000 in four months, may account for your not having it, although I know your library and other members of the staff do have copies.

Slipped and slid around the responsibilities of a publisher, as a writer I have completed the rough draft of a sequel. It goes further, with evidence not available at the time WHITENASH was written or to which proper meaning could not then be given, documenting in perhaps an even more shocking manner the fault and error, and showing how the whitewash was applied. Although I believe my writing in this field to be the strongest, I also believe I am alone in not assaulting the integrity of the members of the Commission. In an odd sense, I am perhaps their advocate-critic. Possibly only those with an intimate knowledge of the subject will realize this. I refer you to the Introduction of WHITENASH for its doctrine. In partisan form this is expanded in another book. Another, beginning with a factual misstatement at its published and author refused to correct when it was called to their attention in plenty of time, aims explicitly at the Commission members, its chairman in particular. I alone stick to the record and refuse to corrupt it for personal or political reasons or at the instigation of others.

There is much in my sequel that I believe will be of particular interest to LIFE. I felt that until you had taken a stand it would be improper of me to call it to your attention. Now that you have, if you will regard it as in confidence and preserve my property rights in it (a not whimsical request if you will compare my book and another now available), I shall be pleased to make it available to you. A Xeroxed copy is now being read by Messrs. Mel Bailey and Paul Noble at WNEW-TV.

I think they will read it rapidly. If you would like and they will do it, I'll gladly repay them for Xeroxing a copy for you. Or, if you would like to keep it for more than a few days (the draft is longer than 400 double-spaced pages), you may Xerox it and I will pay you the cost when you return it to me.

These people at WNEW can, I think, tell you something of me, for they have seen me under very considerable pressure on this subject and know my spontaneous reactions, my command of the subject matter, my intransigent passion for scrupulous accuracy with it, and I hope it is no exaggeration or conceit to say my integrity and purposeful pursuit of the recapture of the national honor that was abandoned with the Report.

I am hopeful that with the sequel I will not be forced to a private printing. The rough draft is now in the office of a major publisher. It is a strong dose, yet I hope there may be publishers with strong principles. If there are not, and if I do not find one rapidly, I shall proceed with a private printing. This time it will not be because so many publishers declined a book they predicted would be a best seller but because I think the content cannot wait.

Because I also fear the potential of a misdirected release of pent-up public passion and would like to enlist all the allies possible to prevent this, I am prepared to make everything I have available to you (or whoever would be the proper person on LIFE) on a confidential basis. This includes my correspondence with those officials from whom I solicited critical comment and from whom there was not a single letter complaining of a single mistake in the more than 100,000 words in WHITEWASH. It also includes material I could not use in either book because of space limitations and all the documents referred to in the sequel, which are in my possession.

From the beginning I have been apprehensive of the potential for harm of the Manchester book because of its auspices. I have been trying to keep track of its author's public statements and of the content of the book. I have read its introduction and have had some of its contents revealed to me by those who have read it or have had it described to them by its author. I fear, as I have all along, that it can be a further national disgrace. My correspondence on this subject is also available to you, again on a basis of confidence, for I believe it is more important to clearse this whole mess than to advance my own commercial interests.

While I am not unmindful of the value you and LIFE could be to me and would be overjoyed if you found editorial interest in my work, this is not the purpose of my letter. It is simply to express the hope that your interest will not end with this editorial and to offer to help you in any way I can. Should you doubt my motive, you need only take me up on my offer to learn if I am serious.

Sincerely yours,

Harold Weisberg