

Mr. David Streitfeld, Book World
The Washington Post
1150 15 St., NW
Washington, DC 20071

3/22/98

Dear Mr. Streitfeld,

Missing from the caption on your today's article is, "Political Prejudices."
A correct caption would have been "Politics, Political Prejudices and the Writer."

What is missing from the article is any recognition of the responsibility
for the lack of interest in major, especially political interest in the United
States is its press, with the Post as an example.

(Please excuse my typing. I'll be 85 in two weeks, my health is seriously
impaired, and I have to keep my right leg horizontal and my left with the heel
higher than my heart, with the typewriter between my legs. And I still do
write every day and because of the boycott of the subject-matter and of the
writing, particularly by the Post, it will be a massive record for our history,
most never to be set in type.)

Certainly the massacre at Chiapas was a terrible thing and should have been
widely reported. It did no harm to report it in this country so it got the
attention it deserved here.

It and other issues did and do in Latin America and the writers are heard
on them there at least in part because of the different attitude of that press.

In this country, the assassination of a president is a de facto coup
d'etat, regardless of the intent of the assassin or assassins. It nullified
our entire system. It is the greatest of subversion to those who believe in our
system as distinguished from those who benefit from it and from violations of
at least its intent.

I wrote the first book based on the record of the Warren Commission and had
it finished the middle of February, 1965. That was five months after the Report
was issued, three months after the appended 26 volumes were out. I had to become
a publisher to open the subject ~~up~~ and, broke and in debt, I became the
country's smallest publisher.

A friendnd who was my Republican Congressman took the ribbon copy of the
manuscript to the Post after reading it. He knew some of the editors. The
manuscript was given to the outstanding liberal on the news staff, the late
Larry Stern. Two or three months later when I asked for it from Larry, he had a
marker at page 47 of the triple-spaced ms. He'd gone no farther in it.

After more than a hundred rejections internationally, without a single
adverse editorial comment, I became a publisher. Made a success of that first
book, too. Dell, which had turned it down twice as Dell and once as Dial, came to

me and asked to reprint it. It was Dell's only best-selling work of nonfiction for six months. Went through four printings, only three accounted for in a big screwing (and suing is a practical impossibility for the average writer who has a suit) and even then not a paper, Post included, even mentioned that first book on our de facto coup d'etat.

That, with difficulty, I still keep available, and after more than 30 years I have not had a call or a letter from any of those of whom that work is so critical complaining that I was unfair or inaccurate in what I said of him.

At the Post its then review, ^{if} I remember his name correctly, it was Geoffrey Schmidt, like ^{d.} Whitewash: The Report on the Warren Report very much and wrote a favorable review. He and his secretary are my source for telling you he was told to kill it by Ben Bradlee, with the explanation he did not know enough to know whether in the book I was truthful or accurate.

(With that standard no Einstein ought ever write a book.)

I've published I think about 10 now, without one being reviewed by the Post or by any daily of which I know, or Sunday.

I was Andy Jackson's one determined man who became a majority in one of my earliest FOIA lawsuit of which there are about a dozen. In the 1974 amending ~~law~~ of that most American of laws one of my suits was cited in the debates, or in the legislative history, as requiring the amending of the investigator files exemption.

That, of course, had no news value so no paper mentioned it. I worked on the Hill and in those days there was never a minute some reporter was not in the gallery. And, of course, it is in the Congressional Record. There was a detail that made it less newsworthy: it was the sole surviving Kennedy brother who saw to it that the legislative history would be clear, without question on this.

Recently the DJ Inspector General issued a report on the troubles with the FBI's lab. It confirmed ~~many~~ troubles but said that at least the Lab did not use perjury. Which is a lie, it did.

~~RE~~ That was a standard FBI means of opposing me in resisting compliance with the most American of laws, FOIA: It lied its head off under oath. In an ~~unsuccessful~~ unsuccessful effort to end that perjury ^{in 1975} I put myself under oath, voluntarily, instead of hiding behind immune lawyers pleadings, to charge perjury to the FBI's lab. If I lied I was a perjurer, and the decision on whether to prosecute was by the FBI's counsel, the USA for the DC, with the Civil Division sometimes involved.

How did the FBI defend itself, how did it confront the one old man who was then ill, broke and in debt? Did it charge me? No, it actually told that court, copy on request, that I could make that charge ad infinitum because I

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I knew more about the assassination and surrounding events than anyone working for the FBI. And the judge accepted that as an answer, a defense!

As did the press, which ignored all of that, too!

If I'd been in Chiapas my chances of being heard would have been better.

When that intendedly dishonest ~~VZ~~ Case Closed of Gerald Posner appeared, with a major publisher who places ads in the Post, the Post gave it a big play. When My Case Open appeared, refusing ~~Posner~~ Posner, the Post ignored that. That it referred to Posner as unable to tell the truth even by accident was not mentioned, nor was his proven plagiarism, also charged.

I have more than 20,000 letters from total strangers, despite the total boycott of the press, and my are some of them wonderful!

When my last book was published commercially, a member of the Post staff bought a copy and gave it to your department in the hope it would be reviewed. It is titled NEVER AGAIN! There was a bit of butchery at Carroll & Graf but I challenge you to get that, read it, and tell me it was not worth any mention, leave alone a review!

I don't keep records on it but I am confident that over the years well over a hundred reporters have been here, none agreeing with me that I know of, and like all writing in the field, they have also had free and unsupervised ^{me to my work as} access to the third of a million pages I got by all those unreported FOIA lawsuits that were among the earliest I have yet to get a complaint from any reporter that I was not honest and accurate in what I told him. Asking nothing in return!

This has become a new kind of investigative reporting and it has brought much to light. Not that the people have any way of knowing that from their press. I have done with books ^{what} the daily press should have done and refused to do.

But not in any Chiapas, ^{so} it is not worthy of any mention or, horror of horrors, any review.

We have those who would be our equivalent of Fuentes and Garcia Marquez but, nothing personal intended, what you represent makes that impossible.

What is ^{news} news has changed so radically since my daily reporting days ended in about 1934.

We had a coup d'etat and not a paper has mentioned it, explained it in any way to the people. We have a government that resorts to felonies to violate the law. Neither is newsworthy for neither has been mentioned in any part of the press of which I know.

There is more, much more, but I doubt you want to hear it and I have to unwind myself, move around a bit and then get back to work. Writing.

Sincerely, *Harold Weisberg*
Harold Weisberg