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WA6-2034

HAROLD & LILLIAN WEISBERG

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Champion



Coo d'Or Farm

HYATTSTOWN, MARYLAND

PHEASANT-CHICKENS • ROCK-CORNISH GAME HENS • WATERFOWL

5/22/66

Dear Steve,

While ordinarily I would hesitate to consult my public-relations counsellor on his day off, time is pressing. This is the draft of a letter I propose giving Bradlee. I will explain the context when I return, for I plan to leave this under your door while you are still asleep.

When I return I expect to tell you something that I believe will interest you and possibly your paper.

There has been a possibly good development. I had a phone call yesterday from the editor of a trade publication called BOOKS. He is excited by mine and finds it, its contents, its form and even its feel attractive. He is doing what he described as either his lead or a major story on it in his coming issue. From what he asked permission to use, it will apparently be a long story. He will also say that the book can be bought directly from me, by mail, and will speak to a New York distributor. It is not the content of the book alone that he regards as news, but also its form and history.

Have you had any response from Swinton? The story was killed at the DC desk.

Unless detained at my first stop, the Archives, where I plan to get a microfilm the Post will print and share with me, I should be at the Post about 10, when I'll phone.

Handwritten signature

Events, like a flooding river, achieve a force and momentum of their own that it is beyond man's power to control unless he has planned and prepared. The time to sandbag is before the crest. The time to control and channel events is before emotions run as wild as the relentless, endless waters.

We have had but a few brief moments to talk. I had no more time with Al Friendly. In any event, as I told Larry Stern, I shall use any and every means I honorably can to persuade you, for I am convinced every interest demands it. You are and must be occupied by many concerns. My eye is on the onrushing flood alone. Unless we prepare while there is still time, we shall all be engulfed in a powerful swirl of great forces on which we may have as little effect as the commanding Canute.

The court I have laid to The Washington Post goes back to November 1964. In all this time, until now there has been no encouragement. Why, then, have I persisted? ~~and do I now persist?~~ Coral may be more red than her lips' red, and black wires may grow on her head. *So I do persist.*

~~It's~~ It's simply this: ~~Explain~~ I think you believe as I do and want what I want.

By now it must be clear that financial gain is not my main drive, ~~It must be~~ *and that if it were*
~~preoccupied by profit~~
~~clear to you that if from my book I was exclusively concerned about profit~~ I'd have
knocked at other doors.

Closeness to my book and its subject, admittedly, may have destroyed my perspective, but I do not think so. I believe, as clearly Al Friendly does, that this is one of the major events in our history. There is no other quite like it, no other perhaps as odious. And the longer we delay doing something about it, the more it gets complicated with other growing crises.

Were ours a parliamentary system, need I tell you the potential of this subject?

By now I have subjected myself to every test - indifference, trial by champion, compurgation, and ~~we have even seen the~~ ^{the} defendant in the jury box.

And by now you have confirmation of the thrust and potential of the other pending books, especially Epstein's, which was offered to Washington bookstores to my knowledge May 19, for June delivery. In his confirmation to Larry Stern and Dan Kurzman, Mr. Willens went farther than I alleged and suggested right-wing political motives from within the Commission staff. These are the people who delivered their confidential files to Epstein and may thereby control the doctrine of his book.

I have shown your people the exact words of Mark Lane, in his epistolary assault upon me, and of Trevor-Roper, in his introduction to Lane's book. They are unequivocal. These men and this book are dedicated to the proposition that all the blame is Earl Warren's. If you doubt this, I will deliver the documents to you.

They are neither right nor just, and their success is not alone Earl Warren's ⁱⁿ but the country's hurt. Their success will be a major success for the John Birch Society and all it stands for and an almost immeasurable loss for all that I am certain the Post agrees with me is decent and good in our society. Some of this clan has gone so far as to almost deify the FBI. Victor Salandria, a lawyer from Philadelphia, in an article in The Minority of One for March actually dedicates the piece to an FBI agent, one of the key men in making the Whitewash! He ^{even} repeats this dedication in the ~~Mar~~ ^{where} April issue ~~in discussing the FBI report, in a writing in~~ ~~which~~ he finds it possible to avoid mention of ~~both~~ the significance of this report in the Commission's work and the failure of ^{the} ~~this~~ report to account for the President's wound in the front of the neck and the bullet that missed entirely, ^{thus} ~~while~~ accounting for three shots without ^{these two} ~~them~~. I have these issues if you doubt my word. ^{After reading my book} ~~The~~ editor of this journal ~~has~~ slandered me with such abandon and venom that I asked Larry Stern if he'd like to own a ^{it.} ~~small magazine,~~ for I don't. ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ ~~This editor,~~ ~~M. S. Aronson, had just read my book.~~ I did not fawn on Mr. Hoover, and I did give the true meaning of his report to the Commission.

What is stranger and today more dubious that this new-found love between the irresponsible left and Mr. Hoover:

Yet, by default, this is the doctrine that will prevail, ^{and} these the voices that will be heard, ~~and~~ ^{They} unopposed, will be credited.

--- There is no way of protecting Earl Warren and the other Commissioners from their legitimate faults, and there is no way of glossing over the error of the government. Nor should there be, in our society. As I seek only an honest judgement of him, who I do respect, by both his contemporaries and history, so also do I seek it for those members of the Commission for whom I have no ~~regard~~ such regard. ~~There~~ Their willingness to undertake a profitless and very disagreeable responsibility, another of the requirements of our kind of society, should not be their entire undoing. Are they the villains or are they, really, the victims? Are they evil and Mr. Hoover good? Did they really do this bad thing, or was it done for them in their names, in a situation where they had little, if indeed any, ^{Control or} choice? And are those who, I am certain, bear the major responsibility, to escape it by ~~transfer~~ simply shifting it where it does not rightly belong?

There is but one way ^{to} ~~in which we can~~ minimize the great harm that cannot be - ~~indeed~~ should not be - entirely avoided. That is by a full and honest airing. This means no heroes and no goats. This calls for the cliché, "Let the chips fall where they may." Of all the possibilities of which I am aware, my book is the only

such means available. It has no hero, and it seeks no goats. It has adjectives

and ~~a little sarcasm~~ ^{sarcasm} that editing ~~will~~ ^{can} eliminate; but it ~~has~~ awaited that

~~editing~~ for 15 months and then, by the alternatives to its hasty printing, was

denied it. The story cannot be told in a few news stories, nor can it be told

with hitherto unpublished evidence. It can and must be told only in a painstaking

and careful retelling of the story of the Commission and its work. I do not believe

it is immodest to claim that I alone have done this. Epstein makes no such pretense.

~~and~~ Lane and his champion Trevor-Roper, make it explicit they have ~~no~~ such intention.

Were my book in the hands of a major publisher who lavished upon it what ~~both~~

these ~~other~~ ^{two} books are getting, major public-relations campaigns and advertising

budgets, it still could not do what I believe must be done, for even a wild best-

seller reaches but a small minority of the population. Here is where the importance

of syndication and serialization in newspapers lies, for only through the newspapers

may any appreciable percentage of the population be reached with the meticulous

documentation by which alone, I believe, the truth can come out.

My perseverance with The Washington Post has a simple ~~and less than noble~~

basis: of all the possibilities that may be open to me, I believe that the Post

and its syndicate are ^{more than any others} ~~most~~ likely ^{cut} to edit and contract these 110,000 words more ^{with} faithfully and ~~more in~~ the spirit and ~~with the~~ motives with which I wrote them ~~than any other.~~

There are other aspects I would like to recall to you. Can you invent a more important or significant news story? ~~And~~ should it not be more than journalistically worthwhile? Should it not also be profitable? Do you ~~also~~ want to abdicate to the Lane and the Epstein approaches, ^{where some collateral attention has already been arranged?}

Al Friendly put it well in his letter of March 25 when he said if I "could demonstrate that the circumstances of the murder and the nature of the investigation were different in major degree from those we have been led to believe, ~~that~~ I "would not have merely an interesting account but the most sensational story since the assassination itself. ~~Any~~ Any publisher who provided" me "the vehicle for such a demonstration would be showered with riches and honor."

Does the book meet his test? Hundred have read it with a critical eye, including lawyers, politicians, editors of various kinds, correspondents, your own reporters, perhaps you, too. I have sent it to members of the Kennedy family ^{and} to all the members of the Commission save Mr. McCloy, whose address I do not have; More than a hundred members of the working press have it. In all, I have

given away about a thousand dollars' worth of these books, a very considerable sum for me, and subjected it to the most critical scrutiny. You, with my assent, gave even the questions you would ask from it to a representative of the Commission several days in advance of the asking.

Mr. Friendly said that for a publisher to earn these riches and honors, the book need only demonstrate that in major degree there was a difference between fact and what we have been told. Neither the Commission's members, its staff representative, the working press including your own people - ~~no~~ one has reported a single error. It would seem the book has more than met his test.

There are other considerations I would press upon you. For example, would you like me, in less than five minutes, ^{to} show you how a credible case can be made for pinning the assassination on the government, especially on Lyndon Johnson? The incontroverted evidence on which this can easily be hung is there, in the record, and I believe there are those who would not shun its misuse. This is one of the many flaws of the Commission's staff work. I did not avoid it, but not one of the hundreds of people who have read the book got the wrong impression, or made the wrong interpretation.

This sort of thing can be done almost without limit. I am offering the
 Post an opportunity to do as much as can now be done to stop it.

In fact, the basis of my appeal is just this. It is not the possibility of
 embarrassment ^{by} of having given up what ^{may be a} ~~there seems to be every prospect is a~~
 good and profitable thing, although I believe, with Mr. Friendly, that this is
 the case. It is the opportunity to serve the national interest with responsibility
 and perhaps in a manner not often provided.

Finally, I make a personal appeal. The late President had many friends,
 of whom you were one. My offer provides you with the opportunity to see to it that
 his murderers may yet be brought to justice.

In the guise of reporting on my book, WHITEWASH - THE REPORT ON THE WARREN REPORT and one by Edward J. Epstein, the press recently carried a lengthy apology for the errors of the Commission. Not any of the evidence contained in my book, which comes entirely from the official testimony and exhibits, to which it is extensively referenced, was quoted or even referred to.

The entire Report hangs on
 with regard to ~~the~~ ^{Seven} theory developed by a member of the staff of the Commission, that a single bullet inflicted all ~~the~~ non-fatal injuries of both the President and Governor Conally. This story quoted none of my extensive mobilization of the evidence on the point, which is entirely against the theory. For the bullet to have accomplished what the Commission attributed to it, besides what it would have done to the President, it had to smash the Governor's fifth rib for ten inches, smash his wrist and imbed a fragment in his femur, leave fragments in both his chest and his wrist, and remain unutilated and virtually intact. All the experts, including those in forensic medicine, said it could not have happened. The Commission and this story "quotes" the opposite. The FBI expert said of this bullet, unmarked by all the ^{many allegedly} bones it struck, that even coarse cloth or leather would have marked it. This bullet would also have had to tumble yet magically stop tumbling and strike with only its trailing edge, then tumble again, etc.

Likewise, all of the other testimony attributed to the doctors and others in this story ^{is} ~~are~~ other than accurate. For example, the doctor quoted as saying there need not have been prompt reaction to the shot in fact said the Governor would have reacted immediately, and he was supported by all the forensic medical experts.

The purpose of this notice is to inform the press that upon request I will from the official documentation of the Commission show that all the statements mustered in opposition to the unquoted single aspect of my book are without exception untrue. I will welcome the opportunity to do so.