

6/18/71

Mr. Nicholas von Hoffman  
The Washington Post  
1515 L St., NW  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mrs. von Hoffman,

Your today's column, "They Did It With Lawyers" is like a shapely, well-dressed woman, beautiful in form and appearance. You (almost) tell it like it is (was).

Having begun with what most of those I write would consider a compliment, may I suggest you are a bit too holy? No insult or offense intended.

The history of the various forms of fascism is pretty clear in that late defense against it is too late. And defense, I submit, is the poorest way of forestalling it.

Some months ago I began taking the initiative, on just this issue, freedom of information. Although I am without means or income, I began a series of suits against the Justice Department and where not, of course, involving it. I charged them with crimes, proved it, won in court, and none of this, beginning with the press conference on the filing of the first was news (not until Justice starting giving others what I had fought and won, when there was mention that others had received it).

When this was not news, you are one of those I tried to interest. I must have called you a half-dozen times, and I wrote you, and then I sent you stuff and asked that you return it because I could not afford to make copies (you, of course, could not afford the time or the Post the stamp). Once we got to talk. This was not then your bag. Suddenly it is. The difference, I suggest, is between me and The New York Times, not the issue.

I'd prefer not to think that it is because now it is suddenly spelled out for you and then you had to think. Or that I had proved Kleindianst a gross liar (his not inconsiderable help fully acknowledged herewith). Or that Orwell is alive and well in Washington, with a full-grown memory hole for swallowing court records.

I also have the only book out saying (and I think pretty clearly proving) that society functioned poorly in the King assassination and that Ray and history were framed. This will not be reviewed by the Washington Post because it was reviewed in the Times, which reached across the country for a man who years ago had made himself my enemy (and then refused to sign or disseminate, not haste, naturally) face my challenges, a man who had been the law clerk of the father of the Attorney General under whom all this happened (and will yet learn he is one of the victims), later the colleague of those in the Criminal Division who did the job, then a U.S. Attorney and now is a propagandist (euphemism, impartial expert) for the USIA, axing Angela Davis. How much more dispassionate a "reviewer" could the Times have gotten? And then, instead of printing any of the protesting letters, it libelled, printing a false one. The infant book must be close to dead, the victim of knives and silence.

But this didn't just happen with the Times, it is not new, and the past made it

possible, the past and the awful crime of silence~~nt~~ when men (and newspapers) should have been heard.

Keep up the great work. But find a few ashes.

With thanks,

Harold Weisberg

P.S. A few errors/~~oversights~~. The Dragon Lady was the wife of the other. Nhu? And the Washington Post as well as the Times sat on the Bay of Pigs story. The difference is that Johnathon Daniels agonized aloud (but would not supply me the text of his speech).