



Lillian & Harold Weisberg

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9/21/71

Mr. Richard Harwood  
The Washington Post  
1515 4 St., NW  
Washington, D.C.

*Wt Post*

Dear Dick,

Your excellent 7/27/71 piece headed "Have Newspapers Muffed Job of Informing on Vietnam" has been lying in the sun by my desk so long it has yellowed. I was awaiting time to write you about it. Before going into the immediate inspiration for my taking the time from other work, belatedly, my thanks for the very honest self-analysis and self-criticism. It is respectable, unlike that unseemly crawling away from Agnew in which the Post and other papers and the electronic media humiliated themselves. And it is the only such writing of which I know that straightforwardly says the fault is an editor's diktat, the same problem I have been coping with and, as it happens with the Post, the same editor. (If you doubt this, please examine our correspondence, his and mine, beginning with Louis Heren's phone call to Wiggins.) In my field, Wiggins' orders are unchanged. The Post still has not reviewed any serious work critical of the official postures on the assassinations save for George Lardner's unfair and inaccurate review of Kaiser's on the RFK case. I understand the reason it hasn't reviewed my FRAME-UP is that your current reviewer lacks confidence in books with unjustified margins. This is the most original of the sins attributed to me. On the other hand, it has serialized the sycophancy that is, factually, untenable.

The word has been passed around at the Post, at least as it has been represented to me, that my work and my word are undependable. It will not come to pass, but I welcome any confrontation on this. I am sufficiently immodest about my effort to be accurate to suggest that you will find few if any writings of the magnitude of mine either as accurate or as devoid of complaint from those of whom complaint might have been expected. In size, my published work on the political assassinations exceeds a million words.

In Sunday's Post there was what I am sure is an accidental garbling of a letter I wrote the editor, a rarity for me, which had the effect of giving me a split personality. Two paragraphs opposite to what I wrote prefaced what I did, and they are hurtful to me. They are hurtful to my book and to the willingness of sources to trust me. When I had this called to my attention, having started work before daylight Sunday and not having seen the paper, I phoned. I spoke briefly to Boyd, who said he would speak to his editor, who would phone me. It never happened.

Today's correction is less than that and leaves me in the position of saying that "Each man who participated in the Attica riots is guilty of premeditated murder and should be prosecuted to the full extent of the law." This is contradictory to what is in FRAME-UP and in the letter I did write. Now why what I have always assumed to be the norm did not apply in my case, ~~didn't~~ why the correction wasn't discussed with me, I do not know. But the fact is that the rectification compounds the damage and the defamation. I make no demands on the Post for in reality there is now nothing it can do to completely eliminate the harm it has done me. I have learned this from long experience on talk shows where radical-right nuts too young to have personal knowledge phone in to quote earlier inaccurate reporting. One just can't catch up with these things. I don't even allege that this is one of the natural consequences of policy determinations overriding news determinations. But I do suggest that you and the Post might cast a few more votes. Like the one you did.

Sincerely, *Hal*

WASHINGT. POST

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Nine hostages and 28 inmates: This is just a little better than three to one. This is not good enough. Each man who participated in the Attica riots is guilty of premeditated murder and should be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

Unfortunately, some people in this country are working to abolish the death penalty. This will mean that a convict under a life sentence will be able to kill and kill and kill — without fear of any law.

From your lead editorial "The Slaughter at Attica" (Sept. 14), one is led to believe that the only lives lost are those of the nine guards. And the "horrible price to pay" was "the deaths of the hostages."

But your headline, accurately based on the incomplete reporting available, speaks of 37 deaths. Could you find no single tear to drop for one of them not in the lamented nine, their wives, fathers, mothers, children, lovers?

In all these words, no question of the real justice today? No concern for what is

### Attica Prison

uncivilized if not in itself a kind of criminality, that abuses of the prisoners are so bad all but two of that long list of complaints were immediately recognized as valid and correction promised?

No word of condemnation for the kind of society in which dehumanizing abuse of the wards of society can't be rectified except by insurrection?

You can, of course, take comfort from the noble objectives of the Chief Justice and the Attorney General. They will eliminate the constitutional impediments to "justice," take care of the loopholes in the Bill of Rights.

Maybe then there will be no more Atticas?

HAROLD WEISBERG

### A Correction

Through our error, two paragraphs from another letter were included in a letter from Harold Weisberg, of Frederick, Md., in a roundup of letters Sunday on the Attica prison riot. (In addition, Mr. Weisberg's name was given as "Eisberg" owing to a typographical error.) The errant paragraphs made it appear that Mr. Weisberg is an advocate of the death penalty. He points out that his views in diametrical opposition are expressed in "Frameup," his book about James Earl Ray, in which he comes out strongly against the death penalty.

We regret the errors and offer apologies to Mr. Weisberg.—The Editor.

10/7/71

Mr. Ben Bagdikian  
National Editor  
The Washington Post  
1515 L St., NW  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Ben,

As you may remember, although I knew the Post would give neither news nor review attention to my FRANK-UP, I bought copies to lend to several of you so that you might be familiar with the contents.

It has been several months since I asked you if you'd like to keep your copy longer. You said you would.

One copy was returned to me unwrapped and in an envelope more than twice too big, by first-class mail, which costs more than insuring fourth class. The book reached me in unsalable condition.

I will be in Washington on the 18th. I'd like to get the copy I loaned you then. I can stop off for it then if your new security system can be informed that I am not about to attempt to destroy the place in the event you are not in when I get there. Otherwise, I will waste the trip to the Post. Or, I'll also be at the office of sud 'ensterwald that day. He is in Suite 310, 105 16 St. Perhaps you can have your messenger leave it there for me that morning?

Several days ago I got a mangled envelope from Matt from which the contents had been removed. Dutifully, the post office acknowledged, by repeated and different stamps in a variety of shades, that it all happened in the postal service. So I guess they are all okay. They are still in Africa.

I am sorry you have never found time to accept my invitation to see some of my new material. In time, I think you also will be.

Best regards,

Harold Weisberg