

Rt. 12, Frederick, Md. 21701
7/11/76

Mr. Ben Bradlee, Editor
The Washington Post
1150 15 St., NW
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Mr. Bradlee,

Your today's review of the Blair JFK book is another illustration of what I have been trying to alert you to for years: the impossibility of any editor or any paper being expert on every subject and the resultant damage to the country from it.

If the Blairs claim to have "discovered" that JFK was an Addisonian, as Hodgson writes, they are liars. Dr. John Nichols, a pathologist, did. His published sources in the Journal of the American Medical Association are those Hodgson says are the Blairs' original work. ("In fact, by dogged as well as painstaking research, the Blairs discovered...")

I am familiar with what to the Blairs is dogged, painstaking and original work. In an earlier commercialism, The Strange Case of James Earl Ray, they use The Washington Post extensively - word-for-word - as their own work. That chapter was edited out of Frame-Up, a book that reopened the ~~entire~~ entire case of the King assassination and like all mine was unworthy of the Post's reviewing. If you doubt this I'll dig out the unedited version for you. I recall one Karl Meyer story from London in particular. Bantam's description on the first page is "his own inquiry," later carried to an extreme, the same deception for which Hodgson fell. I can't be sure after eight years but I think you'll find the Post's exact words presented by Blair as his own in his last chapter.

Is this "The Search for JFK" or is it part of the virtual campaign against the popular recollection of him and what in time he started trying to do for the country? Is this really uncritical attention and your recent extensive attention to the wild and irrational theory that is really without factual basis - the Castro-kickback theory of the JFK assassination - part of an (unintended by you, I'm sure) assault on everything JFK came to stand for? (I will take the time if you want to argue your ANLASH diversion.)

Beginning with the overt plagiarism and the disclaimer of "voyeurism" all this builds to what as an editor you must find a startling revelation, "that shrewd manipulation of the media can make a man president of the United States. We think that matters." And that unique villain, Joe Kennedy (there have been no "Mark Hannas in your history, no Hardings), is "the artifex maximus, creator and orchestrator of the most powerful myth of our times." Guess you never heard of Nixon. Even Eisenhower. And after JFK ~~was~~ a President in his own right his record as President, especially for the last year, is also a myth.

The pseudo-scholarly pap is worth 6 1/2 wide-column inches in your editorial judgement? And right before an election, on the eve of the JFK party's convention?

Let me compare this with some of the Post's more recent editorial judgements. In this it is not my purpose to fight with you. I am addressing what your judgements mean in terms of what people, especially in government, can know and believe.

We have our first unelected President who wants to be elected. You and everyone else present him as Mr. Good-Guy, a clean football type. When I published the proof that he is really a criminal, having stolen and sold for profit ~~maxima~~ what was classified TOP SECRET SECRET - and they perjured himself about this in his confirmation hearings - that was not news. (Does a President have to die before the kind of person he is is news?)

In fact he put a political crony on the public teat to ghost that book. also not ~~was~~ news. And knew better than he wrote. "ot news. Completely corrupted the transcript he stole ~~which~~ ^{while} not indicating any editing. How could this be news about a President?

There is more a out Ford unfit for the Post's readers. A year ago April I gave Bill Claiborne a xerox of an executive session of the Warren Commission I had spent about seven years trying to get. I referred to it at a press conference. Afterward Bill came up, having read the 13 pages, and pointed out where I had understated the real meanings. He then sent that to the Post and some of your staff discussed it with me.

This has current topicality with your non-reporting of the Schweiker report, which in context is a Ford campaign documents. It exculpates the Warren Commission by blaming the FBI and CIA for all that Commission's failings. It actually says they because of this the Commission a) did not know what it had to and b) was "unable" to function. To my surprise and ~~my~~ disappointment in him, Shhweiker added on Face the Nation that we now had to look into the involvement of the LBJ White House. (Not news to the print press.)

Read that transcript. If you can't retrieve the copy I gave Claiborne you have it in Post Mortem (pp. 475-87).

Ford was there, participating, although listening was enough. Not entirely unsophisticated, either, as in finding it "a strange circumstance" that Oswald was writing the Communists and the Trotskeyites at the same time (p.481).

You told you readers that the Commission did not know what the Schweiker report says about the possibility of conspiracy and that this was because the FBI and CIA withheld from it. But your own files, from me, show that they did - and knew of this withholding and what to look for and that they had to (p.485):

"...they have not run out all kinds of leads in Mexico or in Russia or sc^horth... They haven't run out all the leads ...But they are concluding that there can't be a conspiracy without these being run out...But we have to try to find out..."

After Ford asked who in the FBI would know (p.486) Rankin explained that "when the Chief Justice and I were just ~~reflecting~~ briefly (!) reflecting on this we said that if that was true and it ever came out and could be established, then you would have people think that there was a conspiracy to accomplish this assassination that nothing the Commission did or anybody could ~~have~~ dissipate."

Boggs agreed, emphatically, after which Dulles exclaimed, "Oh, terrible," leading Boggs to add, "its implications of this are fantastic" and Dulles then to ~~xxxx~~ evaluate, "Terrific."

In the end they all -Ford included - agreed with Dulles' worry about their knowledge by January 22, 1964 - when the investigation was barely begun - "I think this record ought to be destroyed."

They overlooked the stenotypist's tape and did not anticipate a devil loving scripture.

The Post knew this and more when it failed to make editorial comment on "Final Report, Book V: The Investigation of the Assassination of President Kennedy" compared with its opening (p.1) disclaimer:

"The Committee did not attempt to duplicate the work of the Warren Commission... did not review the findings and conclusions... did not re-examine the physical evidence... did not review one of the principal questions facing the Commission: whether Lee Harvey Oswald was in fact the assassin..."

Without this what is or can be relevant in that "report?"

Cui bono? Only Ford, whose "very strong" supporter Schweiker is. (I did not see in the Post what I heard on radio news, that after this "investigation" was started

the White House let it be known Ford was considering Schweiker as a vice-presidential running mate.

Well, as ~~XXXX~~ the Blairs say, "shrewd manipulation of the media can make a man president."

It is not impossible for the media not to permit itself to be manipulated.

It also is not impossible for the media not to manipulate itself, as it does regularly by deciding what to report and what not to.

So you plug a doctrinaire plagiarism defaming JFK and suppress the truth about the man who is responsible for not investigating how JFK was killed, or why?

(You'll have another chance soon: Ford as McCarthy.)

JFK, you tell your readers, was not "robust," not a "dedicated and brilliant scholar" (especially when compared with the gum-chewer who replace ketchup on the soft-tage cheese with A-1 Sauce?), was "a 'manufactured war hero'" ("though he did save one life") and his (not, say Ike's or anyone else's) "womanizing" is "unattractive."

There is no, let us say Ford "legend" but with a JFK as President there is this Kennedy "legend" from his pre-Presidential years. This is made to appear reasonable by the promise of another book if only the remaining Kennedys will stop all that suppression. There is, naturally, no way a good reporter can get around this.

But who expect more of them? Didn't Bobby get JFK killed from what I've read in the Post? And in this, from what I've also been led to believe by the Post, isn't the real assassin's identification immaterial?

The Post and its editing remind me of what a younger Solzhenitsyn wrote, "As little truth as there is in the world, the supply is greater than the demand."

In the years of our Ford,

Harold Weisberg