

Mr. George Lardner
Washington Post
1150 15 St., NW
Washington, D.C. 20005

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Dear George,

If I were to try to change your mind, I couldn't. I haven't tried in the past and I'm not now. You've had your views on the assassinations, they do not coincide with mine, and there is a record of almost 20 years of it having made no difference to me at all in what I've been willing to do to try to help you. During that time, as you may or may not remember, you've even expressed surprise and exclaimed, "Why you are defending the FBI!"

I hope you remember some of the things you said because I believe you demeaned yourself and I'd like to believe you do not really believe some of what you repeated in the face of my surprise.

And, in all that time, with so much at stake for me, I do not recall ever asking for any personal attention. Of anyone else, either, for that matter. Not even when I subjected myself to contempt charges in the interest of, as I put it last night, "Ungrateful bastards (Shakespearean) like you."

For what risks I've run, costs I've borne, for what I've done, nobody owes me anything. Not you, not anyone else. I have and I do try to do what I believe I am obligated to do. I don't think you care for an explanation but if you do I'll provide it.

Perhaps it is because of my beliefs that I was more shocked when you said and repeated what shocked me so, that it is perfectly OK for the government, particularly its major police agency, to compile dossiers on anyone and everyone, people not accused of any crime. In this you endorse the police state. It is not genuine conservative belief and it is the police state. Indispensable in one and serving no other purpose in any other kind of state. So, in your own interest, I do hope you will give this serious thought.

If you had said there is a limit to how many times you can fight your desk or that you did not want to fight it now you'd have said only what I'd anticipated and in fact, said for you when you didn't say it. Instead you argued that there was nothing of any news interest or value - not in terms of your desk but as your own opinion. You know better, you demeaned yourself in this and I do not even try to guess what underlies it.

While most of my life has not been spent writing news, all of it has been spent observing it and I did rather well while doing it. Going back to high school, 1929, when I edited the paper that won Columbia's All American honor, to 1932 when I ad libbed most of the story filed by amateur radio during a hurricane by my paper's correspondent, for which he got the Pulitzer, to when prohibition was repealed, when I became a syndicated byline feature writer by doing what my city editor suggested with the feature he knew the owner wouldn't like. I wasn't old enough to vote and if you had been born, you hadn't been out of diapers very long. There is more, but my point is that I am not without some knowledge of what is news and what is legitimate feature material. I stop this here because I'm also not trying to promote anything. I'm getting to something else, and I do hope you'll take it as I intend it, not as condemnation but as something to think about. I am asking you to think about whether your personal views influence your news judgements.

In this I will not discuss anything related to the assassination. I limit myself to what you read about the courts, the judicial system, the government's mendacity, and the unhidden corruption of all. When any such substantial question

is raised, and I sure as hell did more than raise it, if that is not news to an American paper then it is a Pravda or is edited by a Goebbels.

What are we, what do we have if our courts ~~fail~~ or worse, ^{are} openly dishonest? What are they, where are we going, if they accept official mendacity, particularly when it is denied after being called to the court's attention? And is absolutely irrefutable?


--- Faced with anything of this nature, what is the function of the press, any element of it? Is its silence the American tradition in which you were raised?

If there is to be justice, how can there be if there can be a threat hanging over any lawyer? And you can see no news at all when dishonest government lawyers and two courts combine to create a situation in which whatever a lawyer does or does not do he is subject to sanctions and they are inflicted?

Of course I'm exercising an old man's prerogative, taking advantage of his years, years the sole advantage of which, along with so many disadvantages, enables the recollection of so much that went so wrong with the world - and how it started to go so cruelly wrong.

What you said last night is so entirely unlike anything I've ever heard you say or read that you had written that I write for but a single purpose, to ask you to think and think hard about what you did say. I do hope that something else was bugging you and that you really do not believe the things you said.

Sincerely,


Harold Weisberg

Separately an explanation. I sent out very few press copies and I did not expect a story as the result of any one. At the same time, without sending them out I knew there was no possibility at all. In no case did I believe the reporter would not see newsworthiness and in each case I believed the desk would nix it. Moreover, there is a limit to how far my Social Security check can stretch. But again, in providing the raw material, I meet my obligation to enable others to meet theirs.

The one place a reaction can be perceived is DJ, which appears to have reacted outside this litigation. They are trying to pull something that will, if it succeeds, be still another abrogation of a most basic American right. Believe me or not. I go no farther because I'm not trying to talk you into anything or entice you in any way. You'll probably find out in due time anyway.