Mr. Ben Bradlee   12/2/89
The Washington Post
1150 15 St., NW
Washington, D.C. 20071

Dear Ben,

You'd have had this apology more promptly were it not that I've had a number of
trips on which I cannot drive myself and consultations leading to heart surgery next week.
However, there really is no excuse, unless you, too, have begun to realize what age can
do to us. I'm sorry I confused those two Cuban names. And I thank you for having Pichirallo
inform me.

Please accept what I do not intend as a boast in the spirit in which I offer it:
in the 25 years that the Post has, intermittently, used me as a source and during which
I have undertaken to try to inform it so that we might both better meet our responsibilities
I can recall no other instance in which I was factually incorrect. As we both learned
many years ago, this is our primary obligation. I still remember and am pleased with
George Lardner's surprised exclamation of years ago, "Why, you are defending the FBI."
Accuracy then required that of me. But if you were more familiar with my work you'd know
that it has focused much more on the FBI than the Warren Commission. And in countless
lengthy and detailed affidavits filed in innumerable FOIA lawsuits it has never been able
to refute any of my attestations - and it even declined to cross-examine me on several
occasions while it was seeking to do me in. (It found stonewalling more effective.)

I look back also on seven published books of the most controversial content and
can't recall a half-dozen even insignificant factual errors. There isn't one that is
significant. All but two were written in great haste and are rough drafts. All got close
scrutiny from the FBI and CIA if not also other agencies. But not much from the press,
which began with preconceptions and policy determinations.

I'm really quite sorry that so much of what I have learned, and by this I mean
established by fact I obtained, has little chance of ever being known to the people
whose knowledge, under our system, is required for the proper functioning of our system.

My work has never been the pursuit of a whodunit. It is I think I can say fairly,
a deep and broad study of how the major institutions of our society worked in times of
great stress and since then. Aside from countless boxes it takes up more than 50 mostly
full file cabinets. I do not have any conspiracy theorizing in any of my work although,
for history, I have some of this misinformative conspiracy theorizing by others, along,
in most instances, with my debubuhlking of them.

All of it will be a public archive at local Hood College but no matter what is
done with it in the future finding important little stories in some 300,000 or more
pages of official records alone will not be easy. Some will not be difficult, if there
ever is the interest, and that we cannot know now. On Oswald, for example - what the
agencies knew and the Commission should have known and all suppressed about him. Like his
top secret and crypto security clearances when he was a marine. It is not in his service
record but it is true. Was this important in 1963, 1964, when the Senate and House sup-
posedly investigated? Even now? There is much more like it that does not come as readily
to mind when my mind is dominated by other concerns.

In my view the assassination of any president is the most subversive of possible
crimes in our society and any one places the greatest responsibilities of all our insti-
tutions for their preservation and that of our kind of society. It is my part of this
responsibility that I have tried to keep in the miles we have before we sleep and I hope
you can believe that this is what underlies every effort I have made to inform the Post.
I am sure that neither you nor anyone else there can recall a single effort that was in
any sense self-seeking.

Maybe I've rambled a bit but I want you to understand that I am sincere in making
this apology and at the same time, particularly at this juncture in my life, so glad that
I've had to few to makes. With best wishes, Harold Weisberg