

JDW: How the WxPost Won't the Pulitzer for JFK Assassination Reporting
(Without Competition)

5/3/75

Before going to an early bed to behave properly after the first little bit of outdoor exercise, this is one too good not to record. From the top.

George Lardner had been interested enough in the spectro/NAA suit to phone me in NYC to ask about it. When Lesar told me about yesterday's hearing and how well it went I asked if any press were present. None. What is more natural for a suit to assure which Congress enacted a law nullifying a Supreme Court decision than no press?

So, I phoned Lardner. He was not in. Left message.

Then I'd heard of the gathering of the nuts/ commercializers Monday so I first prepared a message for Lesar to deliver and then got to thinking that perhaps I ought to give the entire story out. While I was thinking about it Lardner phoned with apologies for not being able to get back yesterday.

First I told him the story of the hearing. It seemed to interest him. I had earlier offered him confidential access to all I've obtained, subject to release after I have full assurances that 100% has been given to me. So, today I told him I was prepared to give it all away exclusively in return for a Monday am. story. ~~xxxxxx~~ He was this interested: we spent three hours on the phone and I read him what I thought would make a real story without getting complicated in the figures which are not essential to the story. Read direct quotes, etc. Cited exhibits, testimony, pages in 26.

By the time we finished he looked at the time and said his desk (national) would be uncovered by an editor on a Saturday until about 2 p.m. He would call me back after that. He did, a little after 3, with apologies for having been delayed grocery shopping. If he spoke to his desk at all he did damned little shopping.

I had told him why I was giving it away now: to prevent more commercialization, angling, deceptions and disinformation operations.

The first thing he told me is that the Post is not going to cover the press conference. Relevant? I asked. No. He was embarrassed.

So I asked him why they are turning it down and he said because there has been no scientists' report on the meaning of the figures.

On the tests not made? I asked. What more than the FBI record in this does it require to make a story that does not depend on interpretations of the meaning of incomplete figures, especially where there are none at all?

He was embarrassed more and I helped a little, which was unfair but not wasted.

The day may come, I said, when the national desks of the major papers are not branches of government. Well, he said, it really wasn't that bad.

I reminded him of the stuff Bradlee is putting on TV to promote his book, all about that great WxPost investigation which showed there was nothing to doubts about the official solution.

Did he read the transcript I gave Claiborne in NYC. Yes. Good story in it. Yes. I didn't read it in the Post.

His explanation is that they do funny things. Like refusing to do a story when Perry Russo solicited a bribe from him. (They used it after Sheridan was later charged.)

So I thought I'd ask how the word "Watergate" ever got into the Post. He said because Bernstein and Woodward kept plugging. Lights flashed.

I'll write a story anyway, he said, but don't pin any hopes on it. And call others.

I told JL the story and asked him to phone the bureau of the Boston Globe and the NYTimes desk and gave him a contraction to give. (Later he told me there was a recorded announcement at the Globe and Rugaber told ^{him} nobody could call before 4 p.m. tomorrow. (This is the same Rugaber who spent much money and effort trying to prove that the financing of the Watergate came from Latin sugar money.) I spoke to the nat. desk of the WxStar. No call back. Then Kevin, in the hope of wire feedback. He is to call back soon.

How could we ever hack it without a daring, crusading, undeterred free press dedicated to the death to exposing official misdeeds. How luck we are!

JL was afraid to call Fensterwal because he was also afraid he'd unload all he has been holding back. I suggested a call to the partner, who has not called me. I didn't expect it. I suggested that JL not go to the press conference.

Some Great! *flc*