

IX. Buying the RGB

In nonfiction writing, nothing is more important than the sources.

If the sources are good and the writing is poor, there may still be value in the accurate writing of then nonfiction.

If the sources are poor no matter how fine the writing, the nonfiction will be poor or worse, not nonfiction.

It is like the old saying, you can't get pearls from sows' ears.

All the early propoganda for ^{Mail's} the book referred to it as coming from the files of the RGB, ~~that~~ ^{alones and from} opened up to Mailer and Schiller, ~~along with~~ their interviews of those who knew Oswald, or at least claimed to have, *when he lived in Minsk.*

It was to have been so entirely Oswald and Marina in Minsk that the original title was Oswald in Minsk.

If Mailer is to be believed, it was not until after he'd finished his interviews *and had actually written Oswald in Minsk* in Minsk that he decided he had to do more. He gave explanations to his publisher and ~~to~~ others but that he was making a different book of it was kept secret. Until it was being manufactured or ^{was} about to be distributed.

In its April mailing for its May selections the Book-of-the Month Club ~~xx~~ sent those it regards as its "preferred members" its "Interview with Norman Mailer." The interview was by BOAC's "Creative ~~Dea~~ Director Joseph Cummins." Aside from the photographer ^{Cummins} ~~he took~~ with him ~~Cummins had~~ BOAC's executive editor Andre Bernard. Heavy stuff for the few words ~~that~~ BOAC's quotes from Mailer *in its blurb*

What is interesting, indeed, provocative is: *end pg 158*

*single epilog
insert*

By the time ~~was~~ he finished writing the "Russian" portion of the book, he was ready to add a little ^{epi}epilogue about Oswald in America, 'My publishers said, 'Oh, don't make it too long,' and I said, 'No, I won't.' Mailer burst out laughing: the epilog epilogue has become the bulk of Oswald's Tale, the journey of Lee Harvey Oswald in America."

In a separate mailing to all members, also short, BOAC says ~~the~~ ^{what is of} most interesting ~~part~~

"Of all things"?

How ~~is~~ could he have ignored it in writing a book about the ^assassination?

"Minimalist stories" and "about life in America" in Oswald's day is what real nonfiction writing about the assassination - or even about Oswald himself - requires of an honest, dependable writer in writing about Oswald, which means in writing about the assassination, which means in writing about what was a de facto coup d'etat?

In saying this ~~the~~ Hailer is really talking about fiction, and not good fiction at that. Which is what Hailer's Tales really is.

"Minimalist" at that.

in a different way:

*indistinctly
Suzanne
Ziff*

"He extended the book to include Oswald in America, studied the Warren Commission books and the House Special Committee on Assassinations findings..."

Thus we know that Hailer had finished the book he'd planned, the book he'd contracted to Random House, and only then decided he had to do more, ~~the most~~ ^{by far most of his book.} what became *a second, a separate* "volume" in the book. *He refers to each as a separate "volume" in the book*

By the time he was interviewed by Housweek, as we quoted him earlier, this story had changed significantly while remaining essentially the same in some respects.

Instead of telling Housweek that it was not until after he'd finished the planned book that he decided to ^{do} add more, he dated that decision earlier, *He then said* "to ~~the latter~~ ~~xxxx~~

"When [our work] was all over in Belarus, I got fascinated with, of all things, the Warren Report." *119A here*

Hailer ^{does} did not have that high an opinion of the work the Warren Commission did: "not that it was a good piece of investigative reporting; it ^wasn't"

So ^{why} did he like it, what "fascinated" him about it when he ~~was~~ was writing a book about "Oswald in Minsk," a book about the ^a assassination, which every book on Oswald necessarily is? *119A 159*

"But it's a marvelous source of minimalist stories about life in America at that time." *119B*

As Paline Sciolino, whose New York Times story ^{about} in Schiller's "Mary Gilmore heist" we quoted earlier, says so perceptively about Hailer,

"But when you have Norman Hailer in your presence, why quibble over facts?"

Sciolino was speaking of the same Hailer who told the New York Daily News, "When it comes to lying, Larry Schiller ^wmakes Baron Munchausen look like George Washington." (April 4, 1984, apropos of Schiller's honesty.)

In ^{consequence} plain, unSchillerized Hailer, Hailer knew when he finished the book he had contracted that it was a nothing.

As he would have known before he started if he had not kept himself a subject-matter ignoramus all those years he was talking about Oswald as the assassin with an

I asked him whose work he used. I expressed the belief it was most likely that of Jean Davison. The book she ^{pen epilogue for a} contrived from that work she titled Oswald's Games.

(W.M.Horton, 1933) And who ^{wrote} ~~wrote~~ the foreward ~~for~~ for Davison?

Norman Mailer!

So, she cued him one.

Mailer does not cite her book in any of his source notes. But he ~~does~~ ^{does} say (xxi) that

"After paying one's respects to the powerful insights and investigations of Edward Epstein [which only ^{one} profoundly ignorant of the subject-matter could say]

one would also offer a collegial salute to the following authors for the implicit assassitane of their work." First is Jean Davison and next, not at all inappropriately is the novelist, Don DeLillo.

Incompetent, ^{dated} dishonest, openly prejudiced work like Davison's can get published only because publishers like to do books that support the official assassination mythology.

More on Davison later, where it is apparent that Mailer used her overtly dishonest selections from the Commission's ~~testimony~~ published testimony.

If Mailer did not use her work or that of another with her special kind of taste in selective omissions in what is quoted, then he has the same crookedness built into his mind.

Handwritten signature

Davison assumed- never questioned- Oswald's lone guilt.

And with all the many thousands ~~of pages~~ of once-secret pages that had been dis closed years earlier, and I alone make a quarter of a million of them ~~refly~~ ^{refly} freely available to all ~~new~~ writing in the filed field, she not only ^l used none of them-she did not even acknowledge their existence. What the Warren Commission published was to her all there was.

At that she was remarkable selective in what she used and, more ^{or} importantly, what she did not use.

For this kind of writing who wrote her Foreword?

Handwritten initials

Handwritten note in margin: "didn't supply space"

occasional expression of ^{mild} wonder about whether Oswald had been alone, *a lone assassin.*

What this also means is that Hailer had ^{still} a great amount of work to do, much more ^{work} than the nothing that began as Oswald in Hinsk ^{required. This alone} was. ~~and~~ why he had to change its title. *pub 1/60*

The text of the book Hailer contracted and planned on as published is 344 pages.

The text of what he ^{added after writing that} ~~did~~ ends on page 791. (The total pages, with notes, bibliography, appendix and a few other pages is 828 ~~pages.~~)

The ~~part~~ part that was in Hailer's own estimate a flop was the easy part. For that he listened to people and ^wrote ^{adding what the W&B him of its files - nothing of any real meaning.} what he wanted of what they told him,

But ^{very} ~~unlike~~ ^{his} from other sources, a few of the more inadequate and worthless books of

assassination cyclopaedia, Hailer had the 10,000,000 words of those 27 large Commission ^{plus the other volumes of the House assassins committee to read} volumes ~~to master,~~ ^{and I do not} to comprehend, to make copies of for quotation, to decide where and

how to use them. What, if Hailer is to be believed, is what he did after he finished

the book he ~~was~~ ^{AS} to deliver ~~and for which the contract specified what he would get for~~ ^{it.} ~~it.~~ ^{(I wrote him, I knew from the time I'd spent on those volumes he could not} have done it, ~~and used the prior work of somebody else.)~~ ^{120A}

So Hailer did over so ^{much} more work, much harder work, for what he was to ^{get} ~~get~~ from the smaller book. With the much higher price of the ^{larger} book probably reducing the number of copies ^{it would sell} sold.

We may or may not learn whose word Hailer used as his own in his "little" addition ~~that~~ is an epilogue to a book as a tail is a dog.

With this understanding of how the book was like ^{Pinocchio's nose} Pinocchio's tongue, how it all got started ^{is} with considering. The sources for this work of supposed nonfiction.

Hailer and Random House gave the impression that it was Hailer's project and that he used Schiller as his interviewer. But in the previously quoted Newsweek interview of Hailer Ray Sawhill, referring to Schiller as "world-class interviewer," also says that Schiller recruited Hailer as writer. Schiller's long history of hiring writers and Hailer becoming his hired hand for the third time ^{on this deal we have seen}

^{The fact is} It was Schiller's deal, not Hailer's.

Id we do not know after all these years whether Mailer's teats-and-tussie~~g~~
 Writing ~~for~~ ^c for Schiller was rewarding in other ways, it did get ~~him~~ ^{him} him much
 attention and greatly enlarged those who know he ^{is} writes books. That is an advantage
 when people see his name on books. ^{or hear of them.} Whether or not they then think in teats-tussie terms.

There is no doubt at all, Mailer's ² second experience writing for Schiller was
 very rewarding. The Executioners Song got him his second Pulitzer.

With two profitable experiences as Schiller's hired writer Mailer, absent any
 thought about the kind of writing the earlier associations meant, Mailer should ^{have} ~~have~~
 been at the least very receptive ^{to} ~~from~~ this Schiller offer. ^{third} ~~offer.~~ ^{proposition.}

Beside, they are both, ~~from their careers~~ ^{but} ~~and~~ necrologists. ^{years of}

For all his talk about the JFK assassination Mailer remains, even after this
 book on it, an assassination subject-matter ignoramus. That he remains that way by in-
 tent is reflected by Mailer's Tales appreciations and bibliography.

Those who do not know that Tony Summers' work is more journalistic, in a ~~big~~ more
 dignified ^{supermarket} ~~tabloid~~ sense, than it is scholarly, may regard him as an
 expert on the subject. He is not. His expertise comes ^{largely} ~~mostly~~ from the writings of
 other.

Without question, Gaeton Fonzi is an authentic expert on the House assassins com-
 mittee, for which he was an investigator, But ~~it~~, like the Schweiker subcommittee of the
 Senate's Church committee, investigated theories, not the actualities. Working for ^{end}
 both, as Fonzi did, did not make him an across-the-board subject-matter expert. In ¹⁶³
 the areas of his work ~~is~~ he is that. But he is not a corpus delicti expert, an expert
 on the body of the crimes.

Edward Jay Epstein's master's thesis is not on the Warren Commission's work. He
 did go into some of that and although it ^{was} ~~was~~ ignored by those ^{who} ~~who~~ looked and aashed
 over it, ^{in part because he was young, a student and going to} ~~in part that was because it was an~~ ^{expanded} ~~expanded~~ thesis and in part because ~~it~~
 came from the political right into which Epstein has ^{increasing} ~~increasing~~ receded since then,
 It is ^{not} ~~is~~ ^a ~~high~~ ^{legitimate} ~~regard~~ by those who are ^{legitimate} ~~subject~~-matter experts. His first book comes mostly

It was densely and abundantly in full leaf that day. The Commission itself decided that its designated assassin could see through those leaves for only an instant while the car was under it as he looked from that window.

Few

thanked her for calling to his attention one of what Mailer calls Epstein's "powerful insights." To make the ~~shooting~~ impossible shooting officially attributed to Oswald (also by the Epsteins, the Mailers and the Like) seem to be possible. ~~Epstein~~ Epstein "insighted" all the leaves from the live-oak tree that for a quite some time obscured the limousine from the imagined sniper's nest in the ESBD. The absence of leaves, this insightful "investigator" wrote, made the shot easier.

The ~~only~~ ^{"powerful"} problem with that particular insight ^{"?"} or was it Epstein's "powerful investigation" ^{123A has} is that the live oak ^e never sheds its leaves! ~~and for~~ things are better known in ^{intense} the controversy ^d over the shooting than this fact and the acute problem it made for the Commission that decided in advance that there was no conspiracy and thus had to attributed all the shooting to ^{alone} Oswald ^{he had made} and from that window,

Wausler thanked Barbara and said that his "book editors" ~~were made~~ aware of "the discrepancy concerning the foliage."

When the book appeared it was reviewed at length in The New York Review of Books May 4, 1978. The reviewer is Andrew Hacker. ~~He~~ He loved the book.

Hacker? Hacker? Isn't that name familiar? Of ~~course!~~ That is the name of the Cornell professor under whom Epstein did his ~~theses~~ thesis, the professor who opened all those Commission doors for him.

One short excerpt from Hacker's hacking with our history will suffice to show ~~why~~ why Mailer has so high an opinion of Epstein and his particular rewriting of our history:

incident
single
space

"Epstein
Epstein has one thesis, which he sustains throughout the book. It is that Oswald entered the Soviet Union intending to give his hosts military information; that he received training ~~in~~ ^{in Minsk,} as a spy while resident of; ~~and that~~ and that on his return to the United States he carried out espionage assignments for the Russians."

Hacker liked Epstein's "powerful insight" about Oswald being trained as a spy in Minsk enough to repeat it. Great stuff, huh?

Even greater when it is recalled that the CIA itself ^{said} ~~so that~~ there was no spy-training installation of any kind in or near Minsk.

In fairness to Mailer, ~~he did not hold this against Epstein or loose implicit~~

eu 2166

Reknowned scholar that the eminent professor was, knowing that Epstein was the kind ^{who thought and believed as he did} of scolar he produced, he did not question Epstein's assumption that Oswald possessed military secrets to give th ~~to~~ Soviets. Assumption ^{seems} ~~erows~~ as proof for those who for their own and not infrequently political reasons support the official assassination mythology because there is no way of supporting in in the established official fact.

The ~~a-fce~~ fact is that while Oswald was familiar with our most up-to-date rader and knew the ~~men~~ means of ^{protecting} ~~defending~~ it from aerial attack and the codes employed in that radar, the equipment and its capability were not ~~secr et~~ so with regard to that, Oswald had nothing ^{of value} (to give the Soviets. With regard to the codes, which were authentic secrets, they were changed as soon as he defected, as the Soviets knew they would be, so if Oswald gave them the codes, that infomation had no value at all.

If there had been any question about this at all, even though the ~~so~~ KGB regarded Oswald as undependable and of no interst to it, it would have questioned him in depth before ~~th~~ telling him to get lost.

Moreover, and this is ignored by all those who write in support of the official mythoogy and those ^{like} ~~made up by the~~ Epstein's ^{possessed} of such powerful "insight" they see clearly what is not there to be seen, Oswald was questioned by Soviet military intelligence, the MVD, as he freely informed the FBI on his return.

In fairness to Mailer and his implicit faith in ~~ME~~ Epstein, Mailer did not know enough to have any question at all about what Epstein wrote. For Mailer ignorance was bliss. So in good faith as well as in ignorance Mailer had implicit trust in all the Epstein/Angleton ~~nenses~~ ^{nonsense} and nonfact in Epstein's Legend. Of which it can be said fairly that it is ^{is} self-descriptive in the ^{sense} that what Epstein ^{wrote} is his "legend" ^{eu 2166} about himself and about Oswald and the assassination, as is ^{about} Mailer's book Mailer's Tales about the assassi, notion and himself.

~~faith in this and other Epstein fictions all of which follow the Angleton-Epstein line so much of which Hailer quotes.~~

Before leaving these swamps for greener fields the same book-of-the-month Club was Epstein "legend" in on that one, too. The cover of its monthly news to members for May 1978 is given to, in the words on its cover over a picture of Oswald with six of those who worked with him in that high factory, "Unmasking the greatest human forgery in history- the real life of a Lee Harvey Oswald." Don't let Hailer talk you into anything? ?

Wilfrid Wilfrid Sheed, remember his not ~~be~~ liking Schiller?-- he liked so much "Epstein's audacious"- which it certainly is-- account of the "madup personality" of Oswald, made in Minsk, he says

all of this Does that sound a little like Oswald in Minsk, what Schiller and Hailer could have believed the KGB would deliver?

Spying, huh. Well, there is a real live bit of that, but not in Minsk. In Washington.

There on February 22, 1978, when the Epstein Digest's articles had not yet been printed, were still in typed form, the Special Agent in Charge of the FBI's Washington Field Office sent headquarters what begins,

"Enclosed is one copy each of drafts of two articles which will appear in the March, 1978, and April, 1978 issues of the ~~the~~ "Readers Digest" under the title title, "Legend: the Secret World of Lee Harvey Oswald"."

So it sees that the FBI has some of that "powerful + insight." Unless the Digest, to continue its excellent relations with the FBI, leaked it.

This disclosed record is from the FBI headquarters main file on the defected KGB minor executive, Yuri Nosenko, (The FBI prefers "Yuriy."), 65-68530, in which it is Serial 1733. ~~xxx~~ "Epstein's conclusion," as this memo states, "is that Nosenko was part of a KGB disinformation ans 165 operation." The FBI had this concern, that it "anticipates that publication of these articles will cause an intensification of current Congressional inquiries into the Kennedy ^a assassination and in Nosenko's information concerning Oswald."

So, headquarters told it field office, they would keep on an eye those developments

The FBI had no worries about Nosenko's "information concerning Oswald." The FBI had credited Nosenko, the CIA had not, and after three years of the ^{Angleton-fed} most unprecedented and ^{subhuman} unconscionable abuse of him the CIA finally did ~~credit Nosenko~~ believe Nosenko and undertook some compensation for what it had put him through. It also became his employer.

The FBI's concern was not in that area. It was over Congressional "inquiries into the Kennedy assassination." *That the FBI could be hurt.*

We could say more about Mailer's sources but this is enough to portray them faithfully. We also do have a little more elsewhere. My point here is to make it clear that for Mailer to be able to see any book at all he had to have information for it the Davisons, Epsteins and other Mailer-minded writers did not have. For the first time in the more than two decades Mailer had been blabbing about the assassination and about Oswald, for all the world as though he knew what he was talking about when he did not, The ~~only~~ Schiller proposition Schiller made gave him that assurance. Or at least because he was so entirely ignorant of the realities Mailer had reason to believe.

He seems not to have asked himself why the KGB dealt with Schiller rather than all the others, anyone ^{else} who had an interest in the assassination. ^{for one} When I wrote it as soon as the USSR came apart, it did not even respond. But then I did not offer it any money for ^{access} ^{10/69} to those records Mailer ~~re-writes~~ about and quotes in length as though the records he quotes have any significance ^{at} all. They hold none unless when Oswald took what trolley to go to what store where he remained so long, not buying anything of or buying what the KGB reported and things of that sort have any real significance.

Mailer does quote them at length.

It is conspicuous, I believe, that in all 828 pages Mailer says not a word ^{about} this, about why the KGB dealt with Schiller. ^{But} then Mailer also says not a word about his and/or Schiller's pay ^{ing} for their interviews, as we have seen. No mention of this in Mailer's Tales. Oddly because ^{of} the kind of book it is Mailer has no preface or foreword ^{or} and introduction or any author's note of any kind to tell his readers how he got to be involved in Oswald in Minsk Minsk. Not even any explanation of Schiller's role in it.

So, if what I believe is true, that Schiller bought the KGB and used Mailer's ^{as} his writer, Mailer did not even hint at that leave alone practise ^{the well-est} a bit of honesty with

his readers ~~hand~~ with our history he knew he ^{was} undertaking to rewrite.

Mailer did admit, after his book was printed, that ~~the~~ the deal with the KGB was Schiller's and that Schiller had cut him in on it. If he could ^{as} he did, freely admit it after this book was printed, is there any reason he should have kept that secret from his readers? At least from his readers? To say nothing about those who reviewed his book?

On the other hand, is there not every reason and ^{honest} and man an honest writer would ^{not} do that, ^{not} would be forthright, would eliminate that possible cause of criticism after the book was out, when it could hurt sales?

It is strange, passing strange, that a writer so extraordinarily ^{generous} with volume of the ^{words he uses} would have ^{not} a word in all those 828 pages with any explanation at all of ^{how he came} to be writing that book.

If Schiller, ^{who} who cut the deal, had a word to say about it I have not seen it or heard of it.

On ^{any} another subject one could ^{say} ~~say~~ that "strangely," after it as no long secret that Schiller made the deal and got Mailer to do the ^writing the media seems not to have asked any questions about it. This is not the same ^{as} and Marilyn's teats and tussie, or as the ^Gary Gilmore execution. It is about the assassination of a President and all that means to the country. Any money deals involving it, ^{had} ~~was~~ it not been about the ~~ss~~assassination, would have been regarded as legitimate news and would have been investigated and reported.

In the absence of any explanation from either of these re mercenary ^{neurologists} and with the certainty that the KGB was then in ^{the} (business of) selling its once-secret records, there is no alternative to believing that Schiller bought from the KGB ~~what~~ what he then got Mailer to write.

Lest it be believed that I am prejudiced in saying that in Oswald in Minsk Mailer had nothing and knew he had nothing I cite the review by Barbie Zelizer in The Philadelphia Inquirer for Sunday, May 7. She looked ~~with a favor~~ on Mailer's book with favor as a novel, which Mailer and Random House ^{insist} claim it is not, but ~~she~~ wrote about the book as nonfiction, particularly the part that began as Oswald in Minsk:

"~~As~~ As fact, however, Mailer's book offers little new. ...His (sic) relentless interviews with KGB ~~officials~~ functionaries and Oswald's former friends in Minsk... do not provide a new informative gloss. Even his examination of KGB surveillance reports and files ~~which~~ [does no more than] support(s) media reports published years earlier."

indno
single
space

This was obvious to her, even though she is not a subject-matter expert.

It also happens that in that issue the Random House ad that was a ~~full~~ full page where there were influential best-seller lists, like The New York Times and The Washington Post was reduced in size to a mere seven inches by four and a quarter inches. This ^{reflects} is one of the many means by which publishers can rig the results of those best-seller lists. So, although Philadelphia has a popular ^{tion} much larger than that of Washington, Random House lavished advertising money in the smaller market which does have its own ~~best~~ best-seller list compared with the advertising money in spent in the larger city, Philadelphia.



GEORGE LANGE—OUTLINE

Mailer: 'He was a do-it-yourself guy'

No Ordinary Secret Agent

Books: Mailer talks about Lee and the KGB

NORMAN MAILER'S *OSWALD'S TALE: AN American Mystery* (828 pages. Random House. \$30) won't appear until early May. But *The New Yorker's* recent excerpt revealed new material covering JFK's supposed assassin's sojourn in the Soviet Union after his 1959 defection: accounts of Oswald the reluctant factory hand and would-be womanizer, KGB transcripts of his bugged spats with his young Russian wife. And the contrarian Mailer now agrees the Warren Commission was probably right that Oswald acted alone. Like "The Executioner's Song," Mailer's Pulitzer Prize-winning book on Gary Gilmore, "Oswald's Tale" was dreamed up by journalistic entrepreneur and world-class interviewer Lawrence Schiller, who recruited Mailer as writer. (His most recent coup: O. J. Simpson's "I Want to Tell You.") Mailer, Schiller and a team of translators and assistants spent months in the former Sovi-

et Union, amassing 11,000 pages of interviews with Oswald's associates—and KGB men who spied on him. Last week Mailer talked with *NEWSWEEK's* Ray Sawhill about Schiller, the KGB and Oswald. Excerpts:

NEWSWEEK How do you two work together?

MAILER: We're free to fight, which makes for good relations. Once or twice one of us would pursue a line of questioning the other hated, and we were finally screaming at each other. And the poor Russian interviewee is sitting there looking at us like we're madmen.

How did the KGB react to Oswald?

They were grimly fascinated—even glumly fascinated. There were so many opportunities to make a big mistake. We have this idea of the KGB as the evil empire, but that's not your typical working KGB man. They've got a family, they want to advance their career, they're as bureaucratic as we are. And they had a hell of a chestnut with Oswald. If he's CIA, he's a

most unusual agent. If he's sincere, it would be a disgrace if they treated him abominably. So they decided to observe him. The KGB are chess players. They play as much chess as the CIA plays tennis.

Were they being straight with you?

There was always the chance they were dissimulating. But you'd have needed a sophisticated writer to make up that legend.

Did your book change direction?

I started with one book and ended with another. When [our work] was all over in Belarus, I got fascinated with, of all things, the Warren Report. Not that it was a good piece of investigative reporting; it wasn't. But it's a marvelous source of minimalist stories about life in America at that time.

And the bottom line?

I think he did it by himself, but I think he was leaned on by the FBI and CIA, which is why there was that tremendous effort at cover-up. Oswald was a do-it-yourself guy. It's hard to see him giving his gun to someone else. It would have been like him giving his wife to someone else.

Family Portraits

Literature of daily life, from two of the best

MAYBE IT'S UNFAIR TO ACKNOWLEDGE new books by Anne Tyler and Sue Miller in a single bow; after all, these novelists have very different voices and, ultimately, different concerns. But as two of the country's best-loved practitioners of the literature of daily life, Tyler and Miller take pleasure in many of the same things—sandwich fixings and porch furniture, old houses and new marital revelations, dumbstruck adolescents and the sleepy affection of longtime lovers. Tyler ("Breathing Lessons," "The Accidental Tourist") works most easily on the surface, reaping everything she can from the ring and resonance of the ordinary, while Miller ("The Good Mother," "For Love") burrows intently through the underground passages that connect her characters. Neither is in absolutely top form this time around, but that's OK: second-tier efforts from these two are tantamount to most writers' masterpieces.

Tyler's *Ladder of Years* (326 pages. Knopf. \$24) describes the quiet rebellion of Delia, who married a doctor and raised three kids and is starting to wonder why she bothered. Her husband, Sam, patronizes her when he isn't taking her for granted; and the kids—21, 19 and 15—treat her much the same way. When she disappears one summer day, they tell the police that she's either 5'2" or maybe 5'5" and her eyes are blue or perhaps gray. Delia really has disappeared, though all she did was rent a room in a new town and find a job as a secretary. But the



DIANA WALKER

■ Wit in abundance: Tyler specializes in the ordinary

Norman Mailer
142 Columbia Heights, Doorbell 4
Brooklyn, NY 11201

5/11/95

Harold Weisberg
7627 Old Receiver Rd.
Frederick, MD 21702

Dear Norman,

You may remember that we met at the Georgetown University gathering Bud Fensterwald arranged, that I then offered you access to all the JFK assassination record I'd gotten from the government (you said you'd give it some thought) and that you were impressed by something Jim Posner filed in one of those many FOIA lawsuits he filed for me.

(Please excuse my typing. What ^{my age} ~~is~~ and medical problems do not account for that the typewriter can no longer be repaired locally does. I'm 82 now.)

Joseph Funder's review of your book in Book World praises you for your extensive use of the published Warren Commission materials. When I first saw your notes, appreciations and bibliography I came to believe that you had been given the research of some ~~one~~ because I know the amount of work and time required to master that material. I do not suggest you were lazy. Rather that it seemed you just did not have that time, even with an excellent ~~an~~ assistant, with all else you had to do.

Of those you thank (xxi), and I'm quite familiar with the work of most of them, Jean Davison, whose book is not included in your notes, seems most likely. This belief seems to be supported by what you used of what she used. Also, she made no use of disclosed records, as you do not, while when the Posners were here Gerald spent three days selecting documents of which he wanted copies and Trisha copied hundreds of them.

Epstein got a tax break when he deposited his records at Boston College but the conditions were such several years ago when I sought access to them it was denied.

That your bibliography does not include works disagreeing with the Warren Report also took my attention. If you'd be kind enough to tell me why, I'd like to know.

If you have Harry Schiller's address I'd like to write him. Haven't seen him since he took me to lunch in L.A. just before ~~Wyas~~ in 1966.

Sincerely,



Harold Weisberg