

# How "History Lies" or Mailer's Dyslexia

When Random House saw the nothing<sup>MESS</sup> of Oswald in Minsky more than doubled in size to the nothing<sup>MESS</sup> of Oswald's Tale it knew it had problems, serious problems, and would have to make an extraordinary effort to prevent a major loss and hope to turn the loss into a profit. Fine, upstanding corporate empire that Random House is, equating its making money, regardless of how, with serving the national interest, it made that effort and spent the money required. *in its effort to avoid the literary disaster it did suffer.*

As Random House's Jason Epstein, *Random House editor in chief and personally* Mailer's former editor, told Newsday's Paul D. Colford, who went to ~~great~~ no little effort to make something out of Mailer's nothing of a book,

*important single quote*

"The reviewers of Norman's book fall into two ~~classes~~ categories - the smart ones and the dumb ones. The dumb ones don't see what he's doing. He's really identified a type here. The character of Oswald, as Norman has him, will endure."

*IB -*  
~~With an initial print of 150,000 copies some will endure.~~

But the "character" of Oswald, as Norman has him, "is indistinguishable from the "character" of the Warren Report and the official mythology that has endured. Thanks in no small part of <sup>JA</sup> Jason Epstein and other editors like him.

In early 1965 another Viking editor introduced and recommended Whitewash. That was a year ~~before~~ any other book on the assassination and its official investigations was published. As a book market is usually evaluated, that was a very hot subject and one that gave every promise of being profitable. *It was a very important subject, a national event.* ~~Aside from its importance.~~ Epstein read and killed the book, I was told. (Perhaps he was then one of the eastern intellectual community who believed that Earl Warren could do no wrong no matter how much wrong he did.)

But from that if not from other subsequent reading Epstein knew and knows that what Mailer gave him is worse than mere trash. But there was nothing he could do about it and he did know Random House's capabilities, as the Colfords and all the other hack reviewers reflect, especially those who regard maintaining a good relationship with Random House as necessary. *in their own professional interests.* They know what kind of investment a Mailer book means. *1/2 here*

(The pun will be lost on most younger readers. Mailer's is a burlesque of a serious work and Minsky's was the most famous of burlesque ~~houses~~<sup>theaters</sup> of about the time he was born.)

Epstein's complaint is like Mailer's at ~~Senen~~ Schnectady against the media, if it did not just love his book there was s<sup>om</sup>ething wrong with it, not with his book. Not with Mailer, not with Random House, not with its and Mailer's editor, Epstein. But what neither articulated, it was the book-buying public against which they were complaining because the public was not buying the book.

But Epstein may have been correct in saying that Mailer's burlesque "will ~~of~~ endure." With the announced ~~initial~~<sup>first</sup> (and last) print of 150,000 some copies will endure. As will the flop of flops that it was for Mailer, for Random House and for Epstein. It may well endure for another reason,

They knew--they could not avoid-- the herculean effort Random House was making with this  
Mailer book. *2 jobs*

And so, early on, Epstein and Random House announced that those who do not like Mailer's Tales are "dumb" if they do not rave about Mailer's trash.

~~The~~ "dumb" included Michiko Kakutani in the daily New York Times who, as we have seen, condemned Mailer's Tales as, among other things, a "cumbersome volume ... a tiresome rehashing of familiar details and arguments (of the official mythology)" and an "ultimately superfluous book."

We ~~we~~ saw also the effective putdown of Mailer's Tales by Publishers Weekly as "plodding," and "pretentious," based on an "unconvincing analysis" of endless "speculations" and "may-have-beens" in which Mailer "suggests" what Oswald ~~may~~ "have thought he was."

In Esquire Will Blythe ~~as~~ <sup>was</sup> pretty "dumb," too. ~~He~~ <sup>what is really</sup> wrote of Mailer's Tales that it had "all the urban panache of a tailpipe dragging on asphalt" and of those great KGB secrets Mailer got, "In actuality, the files cast all the crestfully glare of a single lightbulb hanging over an interrogators's table." that "doesn't tell us much" and is "dull." So, Blythe is "dumb," too.

So also is <sup>D</sup>cidre Donahue who began her USA Today review ~~talking~~ saying of this "tome" that "'Readers not obsessed with Lee Harvey Oswald will require toothpicks to keep their eyelids from drooping into a coma-like slumber" in which Mailer offers ~~it~~ "little but conjecture." She ends calling it a "very long, tedious book."

"Dumb," too, ~~is~~ <sup>was</sup> the San Francisco Chronicle's book-review editor, Patricia Holt, who <sup>h</sup> while making her review of Mailer's Tales the cover review and giving it the entire cover page and almost another <sup>full page</sup> inside still said that, "Mailer, in plodding through familiar territory, offers nothing original." (She also went <sup>all the way</sup> to New York to cover the Random House press conference on release of the book and gave it close to a full-sized newspaper page of additional space.)

Lars-~~Erik~~ Erik Nelson wrote in the Sunday New York News that in "this huge, rambling, disorderedly turtle of a book" Mailer "is a little bit dippy" in his "sociology" and that "none of this has anything to do with the Kennedy assassination" despite the "juicy details" of "Marina's alleged sexual promiscuity" from "an alcoholic and a liar." 24 here

He must have been dumber than all the other dumb ones whose reviews I saw  
 because he is alone among them in perceiving the outrageous indecency of which Mailer  
 was capable in his ~~mis~~ <sup>abuse</sup> ~~misuse~~ of Marina to <sup>very dull</sup> give his book some excitement.

3 Feb

The Daily News' review began <sup>saying</sup> "that if Mailer had to condense his 800-  
 page biography of Lee Harvey Oswald into a single sentence" <sup>as of</sup> reviewer David ~~Hu~~-c Hinckley  
 said it would be "~~It~~ was a terrible life," that "stumbles through failures so abject  
 no one notices or cares." This is hardly <sup>e/</sup> reason "to spend \$30 for the book, ten dollars  
 more in Canada."

So, as Epstein indicates in castigating all who do not fall over themselves in  
<sup>support of</sup> <sup>deifying</sup> Random House's very large investment in what is "dull," "stumbles," is a "cum-  
 bersome, tiresome rehashing" <sup>a</sup> "tiresome" and "ultimately superfluous book" whose readers  
 will "require toothpicks to keep their eyelids from ~~drooping~~ drooping into a coma-like  
 slumber" over "little but conjecture" as they read this book that "offers nothing  
 original" and has "all the panache" of a <sup>dragging</sup> ~~tail~~ tailpipe, <sup>have</sup> have to be dumb  
 and at least by inference will not be on Random House's list of friends to be treated  
 like <sup>friends</sup> friends, especially when ads are placed.

From Harold Evans down and <sup>below</sup> from Epstein <sup>from him</sup> up there is not a single dope who  
 had anything to do with Mailer's Frankenstein. They all could perceive what almost all  
 the reviewers found obvious, that as terrible bad books go this was the very worst.

As ~~can~~ cannot be repeated too many times about this and other books of its  
 genre, not a single publisher obtained the once-traditional peer reviews for serious  
 nonfiction. Not that smaller publishers anxious to mine what they anticipated would be  
 gold did not get and ignore peer reviews on this subject. No book in support of the  
 official assassination mythology can survive any legitimate peer review, as my Case Open  
 establishes with Posner and this <sup>one</sup> details about Mailer. Yet without peer review Random  
 House published Posner in 1993 and Mailer in 1995 and in between its property, Knopf,  
 published Riebling's puerile <sup>w/</sup> Wedge, all in support of the official mythology <sup>that</sup> or Oswald  
 was the lone-nut assassin.

The absence of any real peer review means <sup>at least</sup> (that Random House did not care  
 whether it was considering a serious, responsible work. It also means that Random House  
 had decided to publish it no matter how terrible it was. That means it had a purpose in

(The lack of <sup>an</sup> index in so large a work of supposed nonfiction can be taken as  
indication of rushing publication but is not <sup>in itself</sup> proof that the book was rushed.)  
↑



obvious

publishing it besides making money. The most obvious of these ulterior purposes was supporting the official assassination mythology. That, aside from other possible considerations, carried favor with the government, the government that then was considering ~~major~~ major changes in law and regulations so much in the interest of the monopolies of which the "Newhouse empire is one.

When it came time for the sale of ancillary rights Random House explained away the lack of interest in them to New York magazine's "Intelligencer" column. Its December 5, 1994 column, headlined, "MAILER SAYS YES, TO THE NEW YORKER," begins:

*incident  
trigger  
of 2/24*

Norman Mailer's book on Lee Harvey Oswald will be excerpted next winter not in Vanity Fair - where he recently completed a three-year stint as writer at-large - but in The New Yorker.

This is explained, "'That's what Mailer wanted.'"

The column also notes the "sibling rivalry" between the two magazines. <sup>because</sup> It also notes that both magazines "are owned by S.I. Newhouse" and that Random House is "also Newhouse owned."

Or, so to speak, it was "all in the family."

With no indication of any interest outside that Newhouse family.

In passing I also note that New York actually said that the book would appear "next winter," <sup>because was winter this</sup> which in December 1994 seems to indicate a year later. <sup>was published,</sup> It appeared, whether or not rushed, within a few months. *4A here*

With the magazine rights all in the family, that meant ~~that~~ no money would be changing hands because it would all be within the Newhouse family.

<sup>long by</sup> <sup>London edition</sup> The New Yorker piece was in the issue dated April 10, 1995.

The Parade cover story promotion for the book that was known to be a failure by the <sup>Parade flooded</sup> time it appeared, across the entire country was on May 14. It was only shortly after this <sup>Parade</sup> ~~Parade~~ extravaganza that Random House so abruptly ended mailer's barnstorming to promote the book that refused to sell itself regardless of all this unprecedented <sup>e</sup> ~~all in the family~~ promotional effort for it.

And, surprise of surprises, who own's Parade?

*meanwhile*

~~While~~ they kept tightest control over the content of what would be used.

~~While~~ <sup>that</sup> <sup>also</sup> eliminated the possibility that with a rejection by another publication the word could leak out that Hailer's work was worthless trash. That could have been even more ruinous in terms of sales.

Each issue states, as is required by law, that it is owned by "Advance Magazine Publishers, Inc., through its division, Parade Publications."

All in the family still.

(Mailer is listed as one of its contributing editors.)

This selection from his book <sup>got</sup> ~~is~~ the entire front cover of the issue.

Advance Magazine Publishers, Inc. is a subsidiary of Advance Publications, Inc.

Random House is also a subsidiary of Advance Publications, Inc.

The privately-held Newhouse corporation that owns Parade also owns the two magazines that were not really sibling rivals, Vanity Fair and The New Yorker.

The New Yorker is edited by Harold Evans' wife, Tina Brown. <sup>she</sup> ~~who~~ edited Vanity Fair when Evans started his overhaul. *and challenge.*

It is probably true that her relationship with Evans had nothing to do with the Random House decision to *go with* The New Yorker for its first big play for the Mailer book. The New Yorker carries articles ever so much longer than Vanity Fair and the more extensive use of can think of publishing. The longer the piece the more the attention to the Mailer propagandizing of the official mythology <sup>*This was true*</sup> whether or not those who read the magazine bought or would consider buying the book.

This, of course, is enormously more true of the <sup>*truly great*</sup> number of people exposed to that propaganda in Parade because it gets into most of the homes that get a Sunday newspaper.

In addition, without going outside the Newhouse properties there was also the propaganda to support the official assassination mythology while still trying to sell the Newhouse Mailer book through all the newspapers and the TV and radio stations Newhouse owns.

None of this costing Newhouse/ Random House a cent.

*SA here*  
This was all in the family, too.

~~It was~~ to Epstein "dumb"  
All of this for the book that was immediately recognizable as what the critics quoted about found it to be, simply terrible. *SB*

But with the all-in-the-family control not a word of this could appear until after the condensation was published, that <sup>itself</sup> publication accompanied by considerable publicity that had to be limited to what was in the condensation.

6 fols

the same Jason Epstein who described all who did not agree with him, ~~as~~ "dumb"

"dumb"

on the merits and demerits of the book as "dumb."

*John SB*

*Debut*

~~With~~ all the many Newhouse resources and properties mobilized to sell ~~it~~  
~~with it to sell~~ and the official mythology to the people.

~~There were~~ Then the not inconsiderable Random House promotions outside the Newhouse empire. ~~His~~, too, was virtually saturation. ~~it~~ got Mailer on the major TV shows and as he toured the country, on the local TV and radio stations wherever he went. These local appearances were accompanied by newspaper interviews, ~~a few of which are quoted above.~~  
*some quite lengthy*

Before Random House ~~reached~~ reluctantly reached the decision that it was throwing good money after bad to continue to pay the costs of Mailer's barnstorming with the book and cancelled that so abruptly, Mailer and Random House had reached a

rather large percentage of all the people in the country, *in their support of the official assassination mythology*

For so really bad a book that ~~it~~ had to know to begin with could not and would not sell well.

Few good books ever get anything like this kind of attention and such extensive attention.

Absent disclosure by Random House or by Mailer we do not know the size of the advance against royalties Mailer got. For him to recover his truly great out-of-pocket expenses the ~~royal~~ advance had to be quite large. Not the ~~\$4~~ \$4 million that other emperor, Rupert Murdoch, was going to give Newt Gingrich but large enough to include for Mailer ~~not to pay money to begin with, to have a travel to and from Russia and Belarus and to live there for six months along with Schiller and others and to pay people there for what they did for him and for being interviewed. Then there was Mailer's living and working expenses for the time required to write this tome and correct it with his editor, perhaps his deal with Schiller the details of which have not been announced called for Schiller to meet his own living and other expenses and what the KGB comed out of him, aided and abetted as it was by his greed. The greed that led him and Mailer to believe they would be getting authentic secrets from the KGB. If not Mailer's costs to be recovered were ever so much greater.~~  
*at here perhaps Mailer's*  
*Schiller did not pay her own expenses*

The promise of secret stuff from the KGB, which could make the book enor-

Extra space

Soon after I completed the draft of this manuscript, often interrupted as the writing of it was over a period of months that made clear recollection of where I'd written what impossible, my friend Gerald Ginocchio sent me a review of a new Mailer book from the Sunday New York Times book-review section of October 15, 1995. As is true of Mailer's Tales that he titled Oswald's Tale, this new book was also

gestating, so Mailer says, in his mind all the time his Oswald book was, *for three decades.*

His Portrait of Picasso as a Young Man, published by The Atlantic Monthly Press, was less than half the bulk of his pretended psychologizing of Oswald and the assassination but the cover price is five dollars more. It had been in the stores only a few weeks before this review was published. The Times chose Michael Kimmelman, its chief art critic, to write the review. Without reference to Mailer's assassination flop, Kimmelman's review underscores <sup>much</sup> which of what I had written about it, ranging from Mailer's fixations to his rehashing of the work of others and pretending it is his ~~own~~ own work. Kimmelman's perceptive review suggests that Mailer has stereotyped himself and his writing.

Fresh on his tales about himself that he titles as about Oswald, ~~his~~ and what I have referred to as his mind-reading ~~from the grave~~ and his extra-sensory perception, both from the grave, and his amateur shrinkery, all of this ha/ving been in his mind the three decades he had both these books in it, Mailer's subtitle for his Picasso book is, Oswald again, "An Interpretative Biography."

Mailer, the self-conceived unique genius with perceptions and understandings denied mere mortals atill again.

At the very beginning, in his first words, Kimmelman wonders if Mailer is writing about himself.

And at ~~the~~ the very beginning, Kimmelman establishes that he, too, is what Jason Epstein castigates as "dumb" because he, too, did not fall in love with Mailer's writing :

*incident  
single  
space*

HE has "a greedy desire for recognition," and "the vanity and the need for group applause of someone like Muhammad Ali." When young, he pushed "his explorations into sex, drugs," and had a lengthy affair that was one of "those delicate, lovely and exploratory romances that flourished like sensuous flowers on slender stems, those marijuana romances of the 50's and 60's in America where lovers found ultimates in a one-night stand, and on occasion stayed together." "Short in stature," "possessed of the ambition to mine universes of the mind no one had yet explored," he was "not macho so much as an acolyte of machismo." He "could not box."

Norman Mailer on Norman Mailer? Not this time, though it's obvious why Mr. Mailer, whose prime subject has always been himself, might have spent more than three decades contemplating a biography of Pablo Picasso. On the other hand, it's not so easy to comprehend why, after all that time, he has come up with such a clumsy and disappointing book, culled, at startling lengths, from already existing biographies.

Mailer's real subject in his assassination concoction is, as we have seen, *self-conceived* really himself and his genius.

Kimmelman's comment on Mailer's "culling" from the work of others also applies to Priscilla Johnson, Gerald Posner, Edward Epstein and the others we've seen. That is

"startling" only in Mailer's selection of those who agree with him in supporting the *while ignoring the established official fact* official assassination mythology) and in the total undependability of what he used from them at "startling length."

Remember Mailer's fabrication about Oswald as a homosexual? He has the same hangup about Picasso. Whether or not prompted by criticism of his supposed assassination book, Mailer could have anticipated this kind of criticism and sought to avoid it with his subtitle. What Kimmelman follows his mild approval of that with also applies to the book we have been examining:



violent  
single  
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Mr. Mailer has called his work "an interpretive biography," to distinguish it from a work of original scholarship. This is fair enough, but most of the interpretations are not original.

For instance, Mr. Mailer is not the first to suggest, on the basis of no compelling evidence, that Picasso might have had a homosexual encounter or two as a young man. That dubious honor goes to Arianna Stassinopoulos Huffington in her reckless "Picasso: Creator and Destroyer." Who cares one way or another, you might well ask, whether he had such an encounter? But like a dog with a bone, Mr. Mailer takes hold and won't let go. What is noteworthy about his book may be the vigor with which he pursues sensationalistic subjects like this one even while affecting a dispassion toward them.

canine  
highly lit ing

All of this, too, could have been written about his Random House flop, as we also have seen.

Addressing Mailer's fixations Kimmelman also comment on his writing. This follows Mailer's "speculations" about Picasso's "sex life":

violent  
single  
space

Mr. Mailer also becomes fixated on the androgyny of the hulking proto-Cubist figures Picasso painted in 1906, connecting them to Gertrude Stein, whose portrait the artist was then painting. Mr. Mailer's remarks on the subject are worth quoting at length, to give a feel for his prose: "It is safe to assume that Gertrude Stein was the most monumental crossover in gender that he had ever encountered. He had to be knowing about this. With Fernande [Olivier, Picasso's mistress], he had entered the essential ambiguity of deep sex, where one's masculinity or femininity is forever turning into its opposite, so that a phallus, once emplaced within a vagina, can become more aware of the vagina than its own phallitude — that is to say, one is, at the moment, a vagina as much as a phallus, or for a woman vice versa,

a phallus just so much as a vagina: at such moments, no matter one's physical appearance, one has, in the depths of sex, crossed over into androgyny. Picasso was obsessed with the subject."

Leave aside for the moment the paradox of Mr. Mailer's twisted syntax in a book that takes art historians and critics to task for their writing.

How inspired Kimmelman might have been had he known about Mailer's assault on the Marina Oswald who would not tell him and Schiller what they spent five days trying to get her to say and then, knowing ~~their~~ his ~~of~~ defamation was false, Mailer referred to her a a whore, <sup>while</sup> ~~and~~ knowing she had been raped!

Kimmelman's observations about Mailer's wholesale use of the work of others also is pretinent to <sup>self-</sup>the stereotyped Mailer in his declining years:

*indent  
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Mr. Mailer's principal sources are Fernande Olivier's colorful memoirs, "Picasso and His Friends" (1933) and "Souvenirs Intimes" (written in 1955 and published posthumously in 1988). Olivier lived with Picasso from 1905 until 1912. She has said that she kept diaries at the time and that her memoirs derived from them. Still, these are books written as much as 43 years after the fact, and by a former lover, which brings to mind the French saying about trying to pull the sheets to one's own side of the bed.

**M**R. MAILER acknowledges the problem, fretting over it himself, but relies on her stories anyway. They provide some of the book's freshest material, to be sure, since "Souvenirs Intimes" has not yet been published in English. But one should expect more of a work like this than that it translates someone else's memoirs.

<sup>uses of his</sup> Mailer's "principal sources" about the assassination ~~was~~ also ~~mentioned~~

have him "trying to pull the sheets" onto himself. ~~as it relates to the assassination,~~ and The KGB con job on him ~~and~~ on Schiller, left them with no part of the sheet at all so Mailer, in trying to save what he was not able to save, <sup>made up (and twisted interpretation)</sup> relied on the stories of others.

However, given the controlling preconception with he began, there was no possibility at all of ~~waiting~~ of "expecting more" from Mailer. It <sup>d</sup>should have been possible, given Mailer's talents, but both his formula and his self-stereotyping made it impossible.

Kimmelman's first words in his last paragraph report exactly what we have seen:

"Mr. Mailer's career, for better and worse, has been a project of self-mythology - assuming greatness by proxy. "

After contrasting his Picasso book with Mailer <sup>"such</sup> classics as "The Naked and

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and the Dead" and "The White Negro" Kimmelman comments that in his writing Mailer is "relying on the idiosyncrasy of his prose to carry readers along," as it ~~did~~<sup>does</sup> in neither book.

Referring to Mailer's Picasso book as like his cut-and-paste "Marilyn," his first hack job for Schiller, and we have seen his cutting and pasting of the works of other of like mind and equal subject matter ~~and~~ prejudice and ignorance, Kimmelman concludes:

*incident single space*

Mr. Mailer might have written a more distinctive book about Picasso if he had observed his own maxim: "It's impossible to truly comprehend others until one's plumbed the bottom of certain obsessions about oneself." □

15

That may have been true of his Picasso book but if Mailer had done that with his failed Oswald in Minsk, or the entire tome he agonized onto paper and had done it honestly rather than <sup>by writing</sup> ~~as~~ writing himself as a genius he would have published nothing rather than what he did. *Sherlock he isn't, much as he says he is.*

What as we have seen ~~in~~ it

*Kimmelman was far from alone in his thorough condemnation of Posner on Picasso. 7 F jobs*

T.F.

Extra space

It was not by the Times alone that Mailer's Picasso book was thoroughly condemned. Completely consistent with the more conservative Times is the liberal The Nation criticism by Eunice Lipton (November 6, 1995). She has written much about painters, including Picasso. She also sees in the descending Mailer what I saw in his Oswald book:

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What a disappointing book Norman Mailer has made out of Picasso. Boring, ~~lazy and indifferent~~ lazy and ignorant by turns ... One old satyr writing about another?... a tired old book that reads as if it were produced by the "L'Atelier of Mailer" for an advance. [His] writing about the artist's erotic drawings and sex life is dreary when it is not embarrassing. ... he imagines that 'the head of Christ can also serve as the button of the clitoris!' What he sees in a sexually explicit drawing by Picasso is 'the heated timelessness of foreplay and finger fucking.'

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Of Mailer's writing, to which she refers as "sludge," she says it is a shame for Mailer and a travesty of art history. Had he done his homework he would have encountered some courageous and imaginative people. As it is Portrait of Picasso is foolish and cliched, ... He really does <sup>e</sup> seem to suffer from terminal Oedipus complex. ... Ignorance and complacency are everywhere in this book. [It is] vulgar and silly in its sexual references. But saddest of all is its apathetic disingenuousness, its lack of heart and honor. It is indeed sad to see <sup>that</sup> such a talent has disappeared and with its disappearance what he does with what it once was is "foolish and cliched," "vulgar and silly," ignorant ~~and~~ and without "heart or honor."

As we have seen it in

T.F. job

*its reporter*

Mailer did even less well in the Boston Globe. It sent H.R. Montgomery to interview and be with him when Mailer returned to his alma mater to speak at Harvard and look at <sup>his</sup> Picassos. ~~It~~ Montgomery's lengthy story takes up almost all the first page of the Living Arts section of Tuesday, November 14, 1995 and carries over ~~entirely~~ onto <sup>almost</sup> a half page inside. Montgomery <sup>openly</sup> ridiculed Mailer and his Picasso writing. A subhead illustrates this:

*indist single space*

Facing some of the paintings for the first time, the biographer takes the gloves off. But it's the artist who scores the knockout."

~~With black headline exaggerates story with heading MAILER vs. PICASSO~~

With ~~the~~ black heading capital letters an inch high the story is headed, ~~the~~ "MAILER vs, Picasso."

Montgomery may have exaggerated. Mailer did it to himself as in his supposed Oswald book.

Also prestigious in book reviews is The Washington Post's weekly Book World.

Its lengthy review is by Robert Storr, curator of painting and sculpture at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. It is no less critical than Kimmelman's and it in its November 5 issue

includes the same condemnations of Mailer, of his ego, of his failures in the book and even of his using the work of others as he does. Storr has a low opinion of Mailer's writing, too, writing not like one expects from the winner of two Pulitzers;

1 space indent

...reads like a big, shapeless first draft that, instead of offering unexpected perspectives on this most discussed of modern painters, blandly ~~by~~ refreshes the ideas of just about everybody who has written about him in the past while failing to bring anything fresh to our understand...

Oswald again?

1 space, indent

At every opportunity Mailer challenges Picasso's manhood.

Oswald again?

1sp, indent

...this volume is as shabbily produced as any in memory, distorting Picasso's work as badly as the text does his life.

Oswald still again?

Storr concludes with words <sup>not</sup> ~~but should be to~~ aimed at Epstein and all involved at Random House and unflattering

Following a few parting comments <sup>and his book</sup> ~~on~~ about Mailer, of which these are a few: "shameless," "overblown," "slovenly mixtures of fact and ~~fa-g-fiaaion~~ fiction," "massive cut-and-paste job," "...pergaps the worst..." Storr says,

indent 1 space

...Mailer's editorial handlers and promoters are also ~~to blame~~ at fault for <sup>ING</sup> letter their palooka into the ring. No matter how big the purse, his performance isn't worth the embarrassment to all concerned...

JFI

As Random House not only learned ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ with Mailer's Oswald book but the Atlantic Monthly Press should have expected from thus Picasso rehash on reading it,

as we have seen it in his Jade Tales, sad for a writer so honored in the past

mously attractive and would provide the most exciting material with which to advertise and promote ~~it~~ it was the most attractive bait to Random House. Had there been any such hot secret stuff the book could have been a sensation but blinded by greed and other considerations Random House <sup>and raised</sup> had no questions about it.

But having neither the <sup>to ask</sup> common sense <sup>N</sup> or the subject matter expertise Random House could not really evaluate the prospect Mailer held forth and merely <sup>assumed</sup> that Mephisto Schiller and <sup>his</sup> Faust, Mailer, would deliver it.

In this joint project of their's Mailer did play Faust to Schiller's Mephisto. He <sup>try</sup> also lost his soul in it, <sup>what</sup> ~~the~~ soul he had not lost earlier in similar adventures with Schiller,

Why an experience<sup>d</sup>, successful able and honored writer <sup>in effect</sup> made of himself <sup>the</sup> a hired pen of a chiseler, a scoundrel, a conniver and a liar albeit with the reputation of making money at it, remains a mystery. Despite his Pulitzer for the Gary Gilmore book ~~from~~ such a deal as Mailer cannot not have <sup>his writing</sup> realized, <sup>his success</sup>, and his reputation was then in a decline, a steady, undiminished decline. Whether his ~~creative~~ creative well was running dry or was <sup>blunter</sup> ~~if not~~ destroyed by his association with Schiller, the two do coincide. 7A-6 here

~~in this book~~ Mailer reflects no capability for self-criticism, a writer's essential need. In it, as we have seen, he is indecent ~~beyond~~ as no self-respecting writer can be and he knew it. He is verbose, unreasonable, ignorant at once childish and egomaniacal and <sup>he</sup> evolved what he had to know <sup>at best a worthless</sup> is ~~a meaningless~~ rehash, How he could turn so wretchedly bad a book in is not easily understood unless <sup>wasted and would not repay if he junked his junk of a book.</sup> without doing that he owed Random House ~~the~~ a large advance he had squandered.

In that event, he had no concern for his reputation.

What remained of <sup>his reputation</sup> it is now gone, and with the creative bankruptcy of the role he <sup>accepts</sup> occupies with Schiller and <sup>his reputation if he</sup> this disgrace of a book there seems to be little chance that he can recover ~~it~~ <sup>it</sup> wants to try.

The professionals at Random House knew all of this and more if not before then, as soon as they saw his manuscript. <sup>them</sup> It confronted Random House with the ~~decision~~ decision

and a rehash in different form of what it had ~~just~~ published, Posner's version of  
that same official mythology. ~~Posner's book that did not <sup>sell</sup> well considering all~~  
that had been lavished on it, ~~the book that for all the extensive promotion and~~  
<sup>Posner's</sup> advertising it had made not a single best-seller list anywhere.



In effect it bought and paid for a best-seller listing it never got. It failed when most readers and ~~the~~ reviewers could ~~not~~ perceive the falsity of his false pretense,

The magnitude of this failure can be ~~be~~ appreciated when ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ what the ~~empire~~ empire really gave Hailer and that book in Parade alone is considered. Its distribution was ~~xxxxxxx~~ of thirty seven million copies!

That, with Hailer all over its front page, reach<sup>ed</sup> a high percentage of all Americans~~!~~.

For a book to bomb as Hailer's did after that kind of promotion it is a superbomb.

Robson's choice, <sup>between rejecting the book/</sup> deciding whether to reject ~~it~~ and risk losing the advance or litigating to recover it from the Mailer who had spent it or <sup>going</sup> ~~to go~~ ahead with the atrocity of a book that ought not be published and held <sup>d</sup> no real prospect of <sup>anything but</sup> ~~not~~ being a big flop and <sup>a</sup> ~~in~~ financial loss.

Random House could reasonably have expected a sensational book because of the promise of ~~the~~ KGB secrets in it. But when Mailer would not go with Oswald in Minsk, he was not alone in recognizing that it was really Oswald in Minsky. Random House knew that immediately. ~~It~~ It then also knew that there was nothing Mailer could ~~do~~ do to it or with it in any effort to make it any better than to rehash the official assassination mythology. <sup>SA here</sup> ~~and that it knew would not sell well enough to be worth anything at all.~~ <sup>Random House / Mailer's book</sup> ~~and that it knew would not sell well enough to be worth anything at all.~~ <sup>avoid a further financial loss from it.</sup>

It learned that with Posner and his disguised rehash. For all the great investment in it, <sup>and the advertising money lavished on it</sup> for all the skill in promoting it, it never made any best-seller list, not even at the ~~best~~ <sup>or</sup> bottom and for as little as a single week. <sup>JB here</sup>

and that was with Posner's false pretense the reader had no way of knowing was false, that <sup>a</sup> ~~is~~ his was <sup>that</sup> new, original work ~~and~~ brought new information to light.

The one thing that remained as a possible <sup>a</sup> ~~benefit~~ benefit to Random House from going ahead with <sup>that</sup> the Mailer dragging tailpipe of a book was currying government favor by publishing it

In this the supercolossal Random House effort to promote the book was more of a favor to the government than the book itself <sup>if</sup> was because it not only reached so large a percentage of the people and the media, it <sup>many, many (of people)</sup> reached millions who would not think of buying the book.

While <sup>these</sup> ~~the~~ all-in-the-family promotions, that lengthy New Worker rehash of what the government and so many writers had already said about Oswald represent no real cash cost to Random House, all those ads so many of which were full-page and all the other advertising and promotional costs, including having Mailer on the road for so long, may not be significant to the Random House <sup>sub</sup> empire of the Newhouse empire <sup>but they were</sup> ~~it was~~

Or is sick in the head enough to convince himself that his ~~was~~ very bad book is a good and a worthwhile book. Or convince people that it was when he knew it was not.

nonetheless enough of a cost to guarantee a loss <sup>even</sup> if the book did better than it did.

In simplification, Random House knew it had a real flop, a very bad book on its hands and it had every ~~reason~~ reason to know that whatever it did to try to sell it increased the built-in loss from such a stinker of a book. It also knew that all the effort it made to sell it as well as <sup>merely</sup> publishing it would be a favor to the government, <sup>particularly</sup> to the parts that have to do with regulations and to those ~~who were~~ dedicated to making monopolies even more monopolistic.

But what about Mailer, what was there in this for him other than avoiding repaying the spent advance when he was not able to do that?

No other benefit or possible benefit to him is apparent.

Perhaps he was stubborn enough to believe that <sup>he</sup> he could do the impossible and make his stinker of a book a success. 9A

Perhaps his ego <sup>of</sup> went into overdrive.

and perhaps he had other motives that only he knew.

Whatever explains it he made of himself the ultimate literary bankrupt and those two <sup>≡</sup> pulitzers and his other honors and successes could not change this one bit and they did not.

He has become <sup>my</sup> the man and the writer who could <sup>(and did)</sup> shame himself as he did with those history majors at the University of Pennsylvania

That was his first promotional effort. It can also be interpreted as his first <sup>P</sup> defense of what he knew is as dishonest, as false and misleading, as deliberately deceptive and in all ways <sup>an</sup> <sup>what he said at Penn</sup> utterly worthless book. It is his confession that in his book he avoided the actual evidence and lied about it. It is certain that he lied to those history students when he told them that history and novels are the same and that they both lie. History does not lie. Liars who write lies about it do the lying.

As Mailer did.

<sup>- and outrageous</sup> Preposterous as this defense of himself and his writing is - and that before anyone knew what he said in his book - it has to be believed for him and his book not to be laughed at by those aware of the truth, by those who know the history and do not

lie about it.

By those, to/, who do not know the fact, the actualities of that history, but do not believe what they have been told about it. This they knew from common sense alone. The official mythology cannot be believed. Nor can any rehash or retread of it.

When confronted with the plain and simple truth on that Larry King Live show, that it was impossible for Oswald to have been that sixth-floor assassin, Mailer pretended that there was proof he had been and that the proof of it is "transcendental."

There is also all that need not here be repeated, those many self-defaming and no less preposterous and outrageous lies and improvisations he came up with when he could not face the ~~the~~ truth, the established realities.

Written and spoken words lie only when those who utter them lie. People, writers do the lying and when ~~y~~ what they say ~~for~~ write lies, it is the people who do the lying in what they write or speak.

It is not the novels that lie, it is those who write the novels.

It is not history that lies. It is those who write the histories who lie.

It is in this sense and only in this sense that Mailer could and did tell those history student that novels and history are alike and that both lie.

Mailer lied also in saying that all novels lie. They do not, not any more than all writers lie.

Mailer became such a liar in his novels that he made the abject apology to the CIA ~~that~~ we saw earlier. Defaming, ~~a~~ maligning, even just misrepresenting the CIA is no easy accomplishment but Mailer was up ~~y~~ to that. He then, remember, also recommended more "wet jobs," assassinations, to the CIA.

So, while all novels do not lie, Mailer lies in his novels. He also lies in his pretended history. It is in this sense that in subliminal self-defense he told ~~that~~ those history ~~student~~ students that novels and history are alike <sup>they are</sup> alike in the lies told in them by liars like Mailer.

Good novels do not lie. Honest historians do not write lies.

If as we have seen, over the years Mailer has been capable of saying anything that at any time seems to serve his purposes or is outrageous enough to get him the attention he craves and the attention that sells his books and his lecture appearances, unless he is crazy he knows that novels and history are not the same and that they do not do the lying, that those who do the writing do the lying.

Like himself.

Why, then, of all the outrageous, preposterous attention-getting lies that he could tell, did he utter <sup>this</sup> ~~that~~ <sup>during</sup> ~~that day in the day~~ of his first effort to promote his coming book and the coming condensation of it, of all the many preposterous and outrageous statements he could have made to these students?

It was, of course, a defense of the indefensible he had written and would be published. Pretended defense, not any real defense. *No real defense is possible.*

But it was also more than that.

He was saying that for novels to lie in a normal, is right and proper.

He was saying that his coming book that he and Random House say is nonfiction was in fact, fiction, a novel.

And thus for him to lie in it is right and proper, because he knew he lied in it and he wanted that to be accepted, to be regarded as right and proper when he knew very well it was not.

Of course he and Random House kept up the pretense that he wrote history, not a novel.

But what he wrote is not history and it is a very bad novel with <sup>real</sup> correct names in it but a novel nonetheless. It is a very bad novel, a tedious, boring, verbose and dragging tailpipe of an inflated, conjectured, irrational and intendedly false novel.

Mailer knew it. Random House and its editor-in-chief Epstein and many others there knew it, despite what they said to the opposite.

Let them published it and made that herculean and in many ways very costly effort to sell it as history, as the truth, for history itself is true if <sup>open if</sup> ~~those who~~

who write it

some of those who write it sometimes do not tell the truth.

That is not publishing - that is whoring - whoring with out history, our real and our precious history.

It is the most reprehensible form of whoring, too.

an honest

What M<sup>ail</sup>er could better have told those students is what has ~~to~~ happened to us so much more of it after President Kennedy was assassinated and the literary whores like him and like those at Random House who both whored and im pimped at the same time

Random House  
M<sup>ail</sup>er and he  
If there had been a shred of decency in them or in him they would have said that what he had written is a novel in the form of a version of history that they and he prefer.

Even this is a kindness for that book <sup>that</sup> is not even ~~this xxxxxxxxxx than xxxxxx~~

It is a deliberate corruption of history, a politically-acceptable and a publisher-acceptable lie.

History itself does not lie, as M<sup>ail</sup>er told those student. History records the lies about history. That they are recorded does not mean that they are well known and the truth is not always recorded immediately.

It is not history that lies about the assassination. The truth, to the degree presently accessible, is recorded, despite the Random House and the M<sup>ail</sup>ers and the politicians. History records the lies of the Warren Commission <sup>as lies</sup>. It began with a lie, as the beginning of my NEVER AGAIN! documents, the lie that the evidence was all in as soon as Oswald was killed and the lie that the evidence proved he was the lone assassin.

History records the immediate <sup>now president</sup> lie by the President to coerce Chief Justice Earl Warren to accept the Commission chairmanship so the intended, built-in lie of that phony "investigation" could have acceptability, by trading on his name.

Johnson coerced Warren into taking on that responsibility both knew was very wrong for a justice of the Supreme Court with the lie that + brought to light in my

In medieval Jewish folklore a dybbuk is a demon <sup>or the soul of a dead person</sup> that enters a living person and directs his conduct. The soul <sup>of</sup> that entered <sup>the</sup> <sup>dybbuk</sup> <sup>was</sup> the soul of an honest man.



1973 book, Whitewash IV, that ~~is~~ if Warren did not assume that responsibility 40 million people could ~~lose~~ <sup>love</sup> their lives!

From a non-conspiracy assassination?

Johnson said, whether he believed it or not, and Warren believed that there had been a conspiracy to kill the President and that to ~~prevent~~ <sup>prevent</sup> this unprecedented slaughter, this holocaust, Warren had to take on the job of convincing the country and the world that there had be ~~not~~ been the conspiracy that Johnson said there had been and Warren believed there had been.

~~H~~ History records all of this and very much more.

But the Random Houses and the <sup>Mailers</sup> Mailers and the major media do not report the truth history reports and by not reporting it and by suppressing it they lie.

Perhaps the greatest responsibility for this is that of the major media.

In our society we depend on it to inform us, not to lie to us.

The major media of books <sup>/</sup> today is the monopolies in books that <sup>m</sup> Random House so well represents and it, of course, a major part of.

It is not the history of the assassination that lies, it is the Random Houses and <sup>Mail</sup> the Mailers and <sup>their</sup> the Posners and <sup>Mail</sup> the Rieblings and <sup>those</sup> the others who write what is not true and call it history.

Mailer did not write history and Random House did not publish history.

Both knew Mailer did not write history. <sup>h</sup> He lied and Random House lied with him.

Thus he said that history and novels are the same and that novels and history are both lies. (What follows requires confirmation from Kurpis)

<sup>dybbyk</sup> ~~But~~ a dybbyk, a dybbyk being part of Mailer's cultural past, <sup>rc</sup> ~~is~~ <sup>rc</sup> ~~in~~.

~~(Pick up and insert definition) A little-noticed dybbyk. 13A~~

After the book was published Mailer and his wife made a talking book of it, on four cassettes. Who merchandized those cassettes? Random House, of course. and after their reading of their selections from that dragging tailpipe of ~~a~~ a book Mailer finally told the truth, atypically <sup>but</sup> ~~but~~ for him <sup>the</sup> the truth.

He said, at the end of those cassettes, that his book is a novel!

The book he and Random House had presented as and insisted is history.

So in the end Mailer also told the truth about what he began <sup>with what he said</sup> by ~~saying it~~

to those history students. His history is not history but ~~is~~ a novel. His history like his novels lie.

Therefore History lies.<sup>?</sup>

Richard Harwood

1/8/96

# The Cost of Celebrity

Press critics have some of the characteristics of amateur dove hunters. We tend to be scattershots, making a lot of noise while rarely bagging any game.

James Fallows, author and magazine essayist, may be an exception. He has produced a book about journalism that seems to me well-aimed. It has a long title—"Breaking the News: How the Media Undermine American Democracy." Its premise is uncomplicated:

"As journalism has become more star-oriented, individual journalists have gained the potential to command power, riches, and prestige that few of their predecessors could have hoped for. Yet this new personal success involves a terrible bargain. The more prominent today's star journalists become, the more they are forced to give up the essence of real journalism, which is the search for information of use to the public. The effects of this trade-off are greatest at the top of the occupational pyramid, which is why the consequences are so destructive. The best-known and best-paid people in journalism now set an example that erodes the quality of the news we receive and threatens journalism's claim on public respect."

The best-known and best-paid people in journalism are, of course, employed by the television networks. They have seven-figure incomes and are as familiar to the American masses as our presidents, professional athletes and entertainers. Their jobs provide them with neither the time nor the opportunity to do the research, reading and reporting required to make sense of the news—to give it meaning and place it in perspective. And because of the perpetual race for ratings, they are often under pressure to entertain rather than inform.

So the news is often trivialized and sensationalized. The "boring" information important to the public often is not recognized or is sacrificed to commercial imperatives. These practices have had a profound influence on local television and radio broadcasters, as well as on newspapers and news magazines. Many of these have been redesigned to give them a television "look" or "feel," providing news in the form of snappy briefs that presumably emulate sound bites. Beyond that, we are influenced increasingly in our selection of the news by following the agenda set by the networks. It's quite an experience to walk around a newspaper newsroom

these days and see half the staff watching CNN or the 6 o'clock news.

Of greater significance, in Fallows's view, is the influence television has had on many of our leading newspaper and magazine journalists—people of great talent and skill. They are not dumb. They know about the big money associated with television and, because they are human and normally acquisitive, they have found a way to get it. The golden goose is the television talk show, a form of news/entertainment that has grown enormously in the past 15 years or so. There are now dozens of programs—both local and national—modeled after such productions as "Meet the Press," "The McLaughlin Group," "Crossfire" and so on.

The producers of these programs want as performers journalists who bring with them a brand-name cachet that you can translate as institutional respectability—The Washington Post, the Boston Globe, Newsweek, the New York Times, Time magazine, the Los Angeles Times. You won't find reporters or pundits from the Waukegan Sun or the Grand Island, Neb., Independent on these shows.

Although appearance fees are modest (a couple of hundred dollars), there is no shortage of journalists eager to perform on these programs, which to differing degrees combine moments of intelligent commentary with various forms of buffoonery. Whatever the quality of the productions, they give writers a degree of celebrity and opportunities to reap the substantial rewards found on the lecture circuit.

Thousands of colleges, universities, trade associations, lobbying groups, fraternal and civic organizations are eager to enliven their conventions, lecture series, seminars and annual meetings with the presence of a "celebrity" and are willing to pay very well for the service rendered. It is usually a 30- or 40-min-

ute all-purpose speech suitable for any gathering, followed by a half-hour of Q & A. Ted Koppel was getting \$50,000 a gig before he quit the circuit. Cokie Roberts pulls down as much as \$35,000. Fees of \$5,000 to \$20,000 are commonplace. A journalist active on the speech circuit can easily earn \$100,000 or more each year, in addition to his salary. David Gergen, then of U.S. News & World Report, earned \$466,625 in speech fees alone in 1992.

There are costs involved in all this. Journalists who work the talk-show, lecture and book circuits are somewhat like the TV anchors who have little or no time for the hard work of reporting that underlies all good journalism. Their great talents are dissipated by the quest for money. Leonard Downie, executive editor of The Post, has noted this phenomenon: "They [a number of prominent writers] are no longer as good in print as they would have been if they didn't have this distraction and couldn't get all this money for saying the first thing that comes into their heads without having to think hard."

Are these the new role models for journalists? Are they not, as Fallows suggests, degrading themselves and journalism? To be entertaining they often are required to define all political issues and political personalities in terms of conflict, as if public service were the equivalent of mud-wrestling. This contributes significantly, Fallows argues, to the popular cynicism about government and the political process.

Fallows exaggerates, I think, the impact of the talk-show industry, which plays to a relatively small audience. Even the best shows—"Meet the Press" and the David Brinkley production, for example—rarely muster more than 2 or 3 percent of TV households. They are households with the demographic characteristics that ordinarily define "sophisticated" consumers, who are well equipped to deal with the bombast and excesses of talk show performers.

But Fallows raises important issues that ought to be of concern not only to the public but to the managers of the media, who can solve a lot of these problems by restricting the outside activities of their employees. ABC News, The Washington Post and the New York Times are some of the institutions that have taken steps in that direction. But a great deal remains undone.

February 8, 1996

Dear Harold,

After I went to bed last night, I got a call from my Internet friend who considers himself to be quite a computer guru. He said he had planned to spend a few hours and clean up the Newhouse project. After a full day, he still had nothing. His direct remark was, "Those people sure cover their tracks well!!" He searched Newhouse Publishing Corp., Newhouse Broadcasting Corp., S.I.N., Jr. himself and Advance Publishing Corp. He said he employed a search program and even tried to come in back through Europe and said all his efforts fizzled! Except for very basic data, he could find nothing. Newhouse, he said, owns about 8 papers in New York state, part owners of papers in New Jersey and the broadcasting company is active around Syracuse. SIN, Jr. is one of the wealthiest men in the world, but, no rundown on his life and accomplishments. My friend, who thinks he is a computer whiz, says he has not given up but, is startled by his inability to obtain data on the Newhouse ~~gang~~ gang!!!! Now I do not feel so badly about my trips to the library!!

I've just finished Wwash II after getting through Wwah I and PM (all rereadings) and marvel at how you grubbed out all that information at such an early date! Certainly, the Commission had the data to weigh, and the resources to obtain it. It becomes a pattern as to how they would use the evidence and material. It is as though they were going by a script and being directed by an overlord.

While I believe that the magic bullet never happened and that it is the Rosetta stone of the JFK murder, I also believe that the ~~R&~~ RFK assassination is the Rosetta stone of the 3 murders of that era. He <sup>was</sup> said that it would take the power of the presidency to crack his brother's case. By ~~then~~ then, the black hats had the confidence to plan, produce and cover and get away with it. I'm trying to find the article on the Dade County (Miami-area) doctor who retired and said he was called in on the JFK, MLK and Elvis deaths for his opinion. I think his name is Davis. He said on TV that he found nothing wrong with the way the evidence and material was handled and that there "is no question that JFK was shot by a lone psychopath." On TV, they showed the sequence leading up to frame 313 and another film clip of the limo going away down Elm. As soon as I locate the news item, I will copy it and send it along to you for comment. It's ~~still~~ still the blindmen describing the elephant!!

Best regards,

Paul Haller

*Paul H*  
*CH*

*Returned reporter  
Corporate publicist*

## Publisher vs. Joan Collins in book deal

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Actress Joan Collins is cast as an author who is either taking advantage of or being victimized by her publisher in a failed book deal. The drama, a real-life \$4 million fight, opens Monday in state court.

Random House says a three-way deal with its American and British subsidiaries and Collins fell through because the actress failed to deliver a usable manuscript.

But Collins, 62, says she spent many months working in 1991 and

1992 to produce the manuscripts for *A Ruling Passion* and *Hell Hath No Fury*. Collins has written bestsellers in the past — *Prime Time* and *Past Imperfect*, *An Autobiography*; her sister Jackie is the queen of potboilers like *Hollywood Wives*.

Random House sued in the trial-level state Supreme Court to try to force Collins to return a \$1.3 million advance. She is countering for the rest of \$4 million.

The actress who played Alexis Carrington in TV's *Dynasty* and appeared in 50 movies said in court papers that she delivered 2 1/3 manuscripts and an outline

on time and in publishable condition. The publisher insists the manuscripts were not "ready for press" as contracted.

Collins' lawyer, Kenneth David Burrows, said other book contracts may let a publisher reject a manuscript and get its money back, but not the deal negotiated for Collins by the late superagent Irving P. "Swifty" Lazar and editor Joni Evans.

Burrows said Random House tried to back out because "to them Joan Collins was a problem; she hadn't worked out."

Random House attorneys couldn't be reached.