

with Si Newhouse. "Roy used the Newhouse connection in a myriad of ways to enhance his power and influence," according to Zion. "There are Newhouse papers all over the country, and Newhouse television stations and national Newhouse magazines and Sunday supplements. It's not exactly one congressman one paper, but it's not too far from it. So if you were a senator or a congressman or party leader or anybody in politics Roy Cohn wanted to reach, you risked something if you didn't take his call."

After surviving his three trials, Cohn returned to form as a full-fledged power broker in New York City and national politics. By the early 1980s, his political influence at city hall had expanded enough so that he could reportedly help Si Newhouse's oldest son, Sam, gain a much-coveted berth along the East River for his yacht. Early corruption allegations during the administration of Mayor Edward I. Koch involved Staten Island. However, Newhouse's newspaper in the city, the *Staten Island Advance*, rarely pursued any such signs of corruption with aggression, even when right under its nose.

Several of the allegations involved companies with connections to Roy Cohn. Dan Janison was a young reporter at the *Advance*, the seventy-thousand-circulation daily newspaper for which the entire Newhouse media empire is named. He remembers his experience when he tried to write about the companies and their ties to Cohn.

Late one day in 1981, Janison learned about a government investigation and filed a last-minute story, which was bannered on the newspaper's front page. He was pleased the *Advance*, with its staff of mostly underpaid young reporters like himself, had gotten a break on a story so vital to its readers before the other, much larger dailies in New York City. "The story came in late and went into the paper fast and I'm pretty sure they were hungry for a follow-up story," Janison recalled. "It was top of the front page. It led the paper."

The following morning, however, Janison learned he wouldn't be doing any more stories about the allegations—or anything involving Roy Cohn. When he arrived at work, the *Advance's* longtime editor walked over to Janison's desk. With a pipe in his mouth, Les Traupman sat down with the twenty-four-year-old reporter and in a quiet, almost fatherly way killed Janison's investigation.

"I realize that this guy Cohn is a sleazy character, and I'm not knocking your story today," the Newhouse editor said. "But in our continuing coverage, we can't use the name of that lawyer."

"You realize that causes a big problem," Janison said, embarking on an explanation of Cohn's role in the scandal.

Traupman quickly cut him off. "Trust me, we have to do this," said the editor.

Upset and frustrated, Janison dropped the story on his editor's order.

though his every instinct rebelled against such a move. A few months later, a front-page *Wall Street Journal* profile about Si Newhouse's empire made Janison realize just how close Roy Cohn was to his newspaper's company. "Cohn acted as the spokesman for the Newhouse organization in that story," Janison said. "I think they routed the calls to him. So I had some inking of what I was up against."

When it came to signing up big-name talent, Roy Cohn had remarkably good fortune as a literary impresario for the Newhouse organization.

With Cohn's help, Norman Mailer was convinced to become a contributor to Newhouse's *Parade* magazine and later to sign a lucrative book contract with Random House. Regardless of their obvious differences on political matters, Mailer, the liberal, and Cohn, the conservative, were similar in their bombast and feistiness, their capacity for self-promotion and sniffing out a good deal. Surely, Si Newhouse's largesse was a good deal for both of them.

Mailer's entrée into the world of Condé Nast began sometime in 1980, shortly after Si Newhouse acquired Random House. At that time, Si expressed a desire to sign up Mailer, hoping to add that lustrous name to his publishing house's stable of well-known authors and to have him as a potential contributor to his Condé Nast magazines. Cohn relayed this version of Si's intentions to Peter Manso, a writer who then was close with Mailer and would later write a biography about him. Si Newhouse wanted Mailer to write a magazine piece about his views on capital punishment. Cohn told Manso. This idea was timely because Mailer had just won the Pulitzer Prize for his book, *The Executioner's Song*, the novelistic and highly acclaimed account of Gary Gilmore's execution by firing squad. Cohn, feeling his way as he talked up Newhouse's offer, believed that Mailer would like a quick-pay day. "He'll pay cash," Cohn told Manso about the Newhouse offer. "We'll give him seven thousand dollars for the piece."

The idea for the essay on capital punishment was said to have come from Walter Anderson, who had recently been promoted to editor of *Parade*. Anderson later told Manso in his Mailer biography that Si Newhouse became very excited when he mentioned the proposal one day over lunch. In his interview with Manso, Anderson said he wasn't sure whether Si Newhouse had any grand scheme to acquire Mailer's services for his book company, as well. "I consider Norman the quality writer of our time, and Si shares that opinion absolutely," said Anderson. "He's extremely high on Norman, but he's high on William Styron, too, who's also at Random House, and I'm certainly not aware that he had an acquisition plan to get Norman. He wouldn't discuss that with me anyway."

To get the deal done, Newhouse relied on the unique skills of his longtime friend, whose great talent was making things happen. During his

talks with Cohn, Manso made it plain that he was not Mailer's agent, but he told Cohn that he was sure the seven-thousand-dollar offer was much too low. "I think you might tell your friend Si to multiply by a factor of ten," Manso replied. Later, Roy Cohn called Mailer himself and they agreed to set up a luncheon with Si Newhouse. Usually, such a power lunch would be held at Si's favorite restaurant, The Four Seasons, or some other midtown eatery. Mailer, undoubtedly aware of Cohn's unsavory reputation in liberal circles, insisted instead that the three men have lunch in an obscure Italian restaurant in Greenwich Village. Eventually, Mailer agreed to write the piece on capital punishment for *Parade*.

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"I think Norman was always a little embarrassed about his association with Roy—he didn't want to be too public with it," said Peter Fraser, Cohn's companion during the early 1980s when Roy's personal life became an open secret. Cohn became involved in other business matters with Mailer. He rented a small cottage for himself and Peter Fraser in Provincetown, Massachusetts. The house was owned by Mailer and was next to a larger house where Mailer's family stayed during the summer. On some summer evenings, Cohn and Mailer would hold court at a large dinner shared by family and friends. "Norman, being who he is, liked people and so respected Roy's differences," said Fraser. "I think Mailer enjoyed his conversation with Roy because they were so diametrically opposed. It was always a fun dinner."

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Indeed, he had found a patron—Si Newhouse. Newhouse's overtures to Norman Mailer, made through Roy Cohn, would pay him sizable fees and commissions throughout the decade of the 1980s and well into the 1990s, with some of the most lucrative deals ever seen by an American novelist. In 1983, Mailer left his longtime publisher, Little, Brown, and signed a four-book contract with Random House for more than \$4 million

over the next nine years. His first book for Random, *Tough Guys Don't Dance*, was excerpted in Newhouse's newly unveiled *Vanity Fair* magazine. (By the early 1990s, Mailer was listed on the *Vanity Fair* masthead as writer-at-large under the name of editor Tina Brown.) None of the Newhouse editors, however, were aware of Si's guiding hand or the help of Roy Cohn in securing Norman Mailer's services. "Upon reading the manuscript it was my idea, purely my idea, to buy it for *Vanity Fair*," insisted Leo Lerman, then *Vanity Fair's* editor, in describing how he decided to run excerpts of *Tough Guys* after talking with Mailer's Random House editor, Jason Epstein. For his part, Mailer seemed to have found some comfort in the size and stability of Newhouse's fortune. "I sensed that what Norman really wanted was to clear the decks and have nothing to worry about financially for the rest of his life," Jason Epstein later said.

The highly publicized coup of signing Norman Mailer provided the sort of big-name literary quality Si Newhouse was seeking in the early 1980s as he established his own imprimatur on the family business. Unlike his father, Si Newhouse was willing to pay for the best talent, if necessary. At Condé Nast, he had learned that expensive photographers and top-line editors were important to the reputation, as well as financial success, of his properties. Mailer's marquee value would lend an air of sophistication to the Newhouse name, one that had been associated for so long with the pedestrian and mediocre. In return, the literary lion was feted by the Newhouse organization in the best places money could afford.

"I have to thank you all, and it goes against the grain," Mailer said at a Newhouse-sponsored celebration at New York's "21" for the 1991 publication of *Harlot's Ghost*, a huge and critically acclaimed novel about the CIA. "As you get older, you have to change all those curmudgeonly ways. I am now in immediate spiritual danger of saying I love you all, but since I am a psychopath at bottom, this is only true for tonight." Mailer had enough presence of mind at that night's affair to thank his billionaire patron and the Random House editor who had helped follow through on the deal fashioned by Roy Cohn, by then dead for five years but still not forgotten. "Si Newhouse, who brings back Venetian graces, and my editor, Jason Epstein, the last mandarin," Mailer said, his bushy mane of white hair making him look every bit the part of a literary lion.

In the 1980s, Cohn was particularly brazen about using his friend's publications for his own ends. To press his right-wing political views, Roy gave *Parade's* 21 million Sunday readers across the country a piece of his mind about the Internal Revenue Service. The diatribe was as bizarre and amusing as it was journalistically reckless for Newhouse to publish it.

Cohn was hardly in the position to be lecturing Newhouse's readers, since at this very time, he was allowing his Manhattan law office to be used as a meeting place for Mafia clients. Yet, while he was under active

publishing business the way they used to write about Hollywood," said superagent Lynn Nesbit, herself an occasional column item. She later formed her own agency with Janklow.

This aura of celebrity was just the most visible change taking place during a decade in which publishing deals were auctioned, sold, and packaged like any Hollywood deal. Bigness—big books by big authors sold in big shopping malls by big media conglomerates became the driving force in American book publishing. Celebrity was just a part of the sophisticated mass marketing needed to promote and sell books. During Bernstein's tenure, Random House was more than willing to play along, at least to a point. "It was always Newhouse's theory to get the big books and pay a lot for them, as opposed to me, who wanted to know what was the previous sales record of an author," said Bernstein. "He always believed that a publishing house needs a big book to help carry things through and that whatever price you pay now will still be cheaper over the long run."

Newhouse appeared confident in his understanding of the book business by the mid-1980s and started offering a steady stream of ideas. His suggestions were usually treated as mandates. He became convinced Random House should compete head-on with any other publisher for the big-name book, regardless of Bernstein's reservations. In relying on such an approach, Bernstein realized his company's fortunes might become too dependent on high-risk ventures, with expensive books sometimes written by untested celebrity authors. Si's approach might also crowd out the available money for smaller, often more literary books that were a fundamental part of Random House's reputation as a quality publisher and that would provide a more prudent return on investment. But Newhouse was convinced he was right. His big-book theory changed Random House's character as well as transformed the world of publishing, accelerating its reliance on blockbusters. Because of Random House's deep pockets, small independent houses were sometimes forced to take the risks they might not have in order to compete. "We've overpaid," complained Roger Straus, head of the independent publishing house Farrar, Straus and Giroux in 1990. "But we're aware when we do it. And of how much we can afford to lose, because we can't put it under the rug the way they can at Newhouse's place."

Newhouse would push to sign big-name authors, leaving Bernstein and his management team to figure out the rest. His ideas could be quite good. From the earliest days of his ownership, for example, Si made known his wish that Norman Mailer become a Random House author. "He wanted Mailer and we put together a deal for Mailer," recalled Bernstein, who said he was unaware of the ways in which Roy Cohn had privately helped to midwife the deal. "Si was very instrumental in getting him and we then dealt directly with Scott Meredith [Mailer's longtime agent]."

Perhaps the most notable success, however, was Newhouse's personal effort to convince Donald Trump to write a book for Random House.

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Ownership by Newhouse family, control by Si. This book has ever so much more on them and a bit more on Mailer. The connection as I recall via Roy Cohn. The connection got Mailer \$4,000,000 from Random House.

NEWHOUSE

*All the Glitter, Power, & Glory
of America's
Richest Media Empire
& the Secretive Man
Behind It*

THOMAS MAIER

JOHNSON BOOKS
Boulder

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Preface to the Paperback Edition

Prologue: Off with Their Heads

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2. In His Father's Shadow
3. A Grand Acquisition—C
4. The Newhouse Concept
5. My Friend Roy
6. Stop the Presses
7. The Artful (Tax) Dodger
8. At Random
9. Cleaning House
10. "Blonde Ambition"
11. About *The New Yorker* a
12. "The Happiest Girl in the
13. Powerhouse

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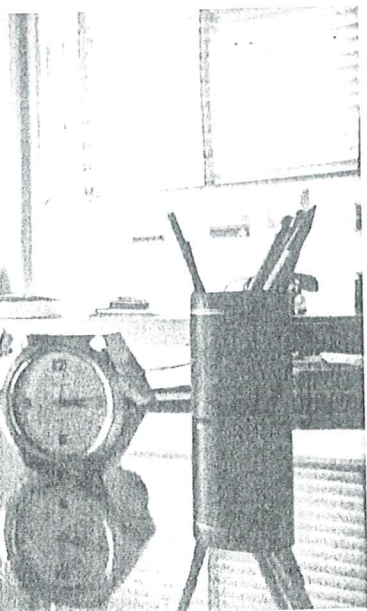
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In 1976, after the purchase of the Booth newspaper chain in Michigan—touted as the biggest deal of its time—S. I. Newhouse, Sr. (*center*) posed with his sons Si (*left*) and Donald (*right*).
Anthony Edgeworth.



At the Horace Mann School, Allard Lowenstein (*left*) was a close friend to whom Si Newhouse (*center*) confided his thoughts of suicide. Although his friendship with Lowenstein would eventually fade, schoolmate Roy Cohn (*right*) remained a lifelong friend.



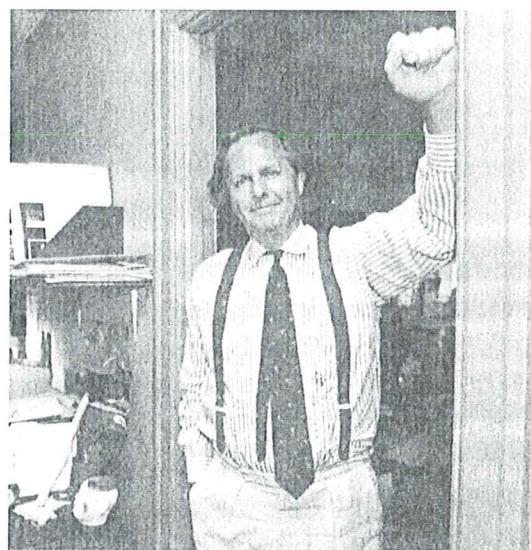
...om in the family of Peter Fleischmann,
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is beloved magazine in 1985. *Courtesy*



...y Yorker editor William Shawn (right) in
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ncement, Shawn met with Gottlieb to talk



Soon after he and his brother bought Random House in 1980, Si Newhouse sought to transform the publishing house by offering large advances to sign "big books" by well-known authors, such as Norman Mailer (left). British-born editor Tina Brown (right) revived *Vanity Fair* after two editors had failed, and then was entrusted with re-creating *The New Yorker*. Left photo: *Ozier Muhammad*/© 1983 *Newsday*; right photo: *photography by Jean Pagliuso*.



One of several British-trained editors at Condé Nast, James Truman (left) proved he could turn around a magazine by making *Details* a success with "Generation X" young men. In 1994, Newhouse stunned the publishing industry by naming the then thirty-five-year-old Truman as Condé Nast's editorial director. During the 1980s, E. Graydon Carter (right) upset many at Condé Nast with his biting humor at *Spy Magazine*, but his editorial ability was noticed by Newhouse and earned him the chance to succeed Tina Brown as editor of *Vanity Fair*. Left photo: *Ari Mintz*/© 1990 *New York Newsday*; right photo: *John Paraskevas*/© 1992 *New York Newsday*.



(left) remained the ultimate survivor in a
rovers. Grace Mirabella (right), Vreeland's
wards working women's concerns and re-
abrupt firing was announced on TV before
s her replacement. Left photo: Viorel Flor-
er Muhammad/© 1988 New York Newsday.



During the late 1950s and early 1960s, the recently divorced Si Newhouse often socialized
with Roy Cohn (left) and their group of ambitious friends, like entrepreneur William Fugazy,
Jr. (center). Henry Garfinkle (right), with a loan from Si Newhouse, started what would eventu-
ally become one of the largest magazine and newspaper distribution companies in the
nation. Both photos courtesy of Whitcom Partners/New York Herald Tribune.



ion photography with his stunning work for
ade him the first staff photographer in the his-
s asked by Si and his mother to paint a por-
tly patriarch. Si Newhouse's \$100-million art
ned Pop artist. Left photo: Dick Yarwood/©
1979 Newsday.



In the 1980s, Roy Cohn (right, circled) was "Special Counsel to Newhouse Publications"—
at the same time that he was lawyer for New York Mafia leader "Fat Tony" Salerno (center).
At the request of mob leaders, Cohn intervened with Newhouse's Cleveland newspaper to
print a misleading story that helped get Jackie Presser elected as teamsters union president.
Copy of FBI surveillance photo, courtesy of James Neff.

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—Si Newhouse. Newhouse's overtures Roy Cohn, would pay him sizable fees decade of the 1980s and well into the rative deals ever seen by an American onglime publisher, Little, Brown, and andom House for more than \$4 million

over the next nine years. His first book for Random, *Tough Guys Don't Dance*, was excerpted in Newhouse's newly unveiled *Vanity Fair* magazine. (By the early 1990s, Mailer was listed on the *Vanity Fair* masthead as writer-at-large under the name of editor Tina Brown.) None of the Newhouse editors, however, were aware of Si's guiding hand or the help of Roy Cohn in securing Norman Mailer's services. "Upon reading the manuscript it was my idea, purely my idea, to buy it for *Vanity Fair*," insisted Leo Lerman, then *Vanity Fair*'s editor, in describing how he decided to run excerpts of *Tough Guys* after talking with Mailer's Random House editor, Jason Epstein. For his part, Mailer seemed to have found some comfort in the size and stability of Newhouse's fortune. "I sensed that what Norman really wanted was to clear the decks and have nothing to worry about financially for the rest of his life," Jason Epstein later said.

The highly publicized coup of signing Norman Mailer provided the sort of big-name literary quality Si Newhouse was seeking in the early 1980s as he established his own imprimatur on the family business. Unlike his father, Si Newhouse was willing to pay for the best talent, if necessary. At Condé Nast, he had learned that expensive photographers and top-line editors were important to the reputation, as well as financial success, of his properties. Mailer's marquee value would lend an air of sophistication to the Newhouse name, one that had been associated for so long with the pedestrian and mediocre. In return, the literary lion was feted by the Newhouse organization in the best places money could afford.

"I have to thank you all, and it goes against the grain," Mailer said at a Newhouse-sponsored celebration at New York's "21" for the 1991 publication of *Harlot's Ghost*, a huge and critically acclaimed novel about the CIA. "As you get older, you have to change all those curmudgeonly ways. I am now in immediate spiritual danger of saying I love you all, but since I am a psychopath at bottom, this is only true for tonight." Mailer had enough presence of mind at that night's affair to thank his billionaire patron and the Random House editor who had helped follow through on the deal fashioned by Roy Cohn, by then dead for five years but still not forgotten. "Si Newhouse, who brings back Venetian graces, and my editor, Jason Epstein, the last mandarin," Mailer said, his bushy mane of white hair making him look every bit the part of a literary lion.

In the 1980s, Cohn was particularly brazen about using his friend's publications for his own ends. To press his right-wing political views, Roy gave *Parade*'s 21 million Sunday readers across the country a piece of his mind about the Internal Revenue Service. The diatribe was as bizarre and amusing as it was journalistically reckless for Newhouse to publish it.

Cohn was hardly in the position to be lecturing Newhouse's readers, since at this very time, he was allowing his Manhattan law office to be used as a meeting place for Mafia clients. Yet, while he was under active

llionaire owner would bestow who had considerably lifted to overtures were made, New-human-rights fund-raising din- never materialized. He could ial support, given Bernstein's no-confidence vote for him

etween the two men became izing what publishing once was atic changes within Random eral during the boom years of ky relationship untenable. In ough his comments seemed to om about Newhouse and his en. "Si looks over your shoul- "but in a constructive way." ng enterprise of Bennett Cerf her the prized property of Si

chuster chairman Dick Snyder dissolution with the same mock Sean Penn. When Evans was he accepted shortly afterward, e was removed as publisher of 1990, the news was headlined ired on the front page of the e telephone.

and sometimes more so, book ebs—touted, lionized, and cas- social scene. Even Evans was owed when discussing her fate. publishers are as glamorous as s really silly," she said in a 1991 ad Anna Wintour and now it's

empire was to invite attention. rity seemed to have rubbed off ans, Sonny Mehta, and Erroll rary vineyards who were now Agents like Mort Janklow and eir record-setting million-dollar ritten were heralded like moon ess is writing stories about the

publishing business the way they used to write about Hollywood," said superagent Lynn Nesbit, herself an occasional column item. She later formed her own agency with Janklow.

This aura of celebrity was just the most visible change taking place during a decade in which publishing deals were auctioned, sold, and packaged like any Hollywood deal. Bigness—big books by big authors sold in big shopping malls by big media conglomerates became the driving force in American book publishing. Celebrity was just a part of the sophisticated mass marketing needed to promote and sell books. During Bernstein's tenure, Random House was more than willing to play along, at least to a point. "It was always Newhouse's theory to get the big books and pay a lot for them, as opposed to me, who wanted to know what was the previous sales record of an author," said Bernstein. "He always believed that a publishing house needs a big book to help carry things through and that whatever price you pay now will still be cheaper over the long run."

Newhouse appeared confident in his understanding of the book business by the mid-1980s and started offering a steady stream of ideas. His suggestions were usually treated as mandates. He became convinced Random House should compete head-on with any other publisher for the big-name book, regardless of Bernstein's reservations. In relying on such an approach, Bernstein realized his company's fortunes might become too dependent on high-risk ventures, with expensive books sometimes written by untested celebrity authors. Si's approach might also crowd out the available money for smaller, often more literary books that were a fundamental part of Random House's reputation as a quality publisher and that would provide a more prudent return on investment. But Newhouse was convinced he was right. His big-book theory changed Random House's character as well as transformed the world of publishing, accelerating its reliance on blockbusters. Because of Random House's deep pockets, small independent houses were sometimes forced to take the risks they might not have in order to compete. "We've overpaid," complained Roger Straus, head of the independent publishing house Farrar, Straus and Giroux in 1990. "But we're aware when we do it. And of how much we can afford to lose, because we can't put it under the rug the way they can at Newhouse's place."

Newhouse would push to sign big-name authors, leaving Bernstein and his management team to figure out the rest. His ideas could be quite good. From the earliest days of his ownership, for example, Si made known his wish that Norman Mailer become a Random House author. "He wanted Mailer and we put together a deal for Mailer," recalled Bernstein, who said he was unaware of the ways in which Roy Cohn had privately helped to midwife the deal. "Si was very instrumental in getting him and we then dealt directly with Scott Meredith [Mailer's longtime agent]."

Perhaps the most notable success, however, was Newhouse's personal effort to convince Donald Trump to write a book for Random House.

Random House had a change of the boss's best friend. Zion was the manuscript when he received dropping the project. Zion said he received a twenty-thousand-dollar advance on was angered by the sudden elsewhere. Both the Zion-written man's biography, entitled *Citizen Wolfe* on the front page of *The* Random House executive told it had problems. A *Washington* "happier and spottier" than von

believes the potential trouble was being surprised to find Jason said, "Jason, fancy meeting you of Cohn who had gone to many of his friends. He felt Epstein was usually wouldn't associate and I to be there, because he wanted I for Si Newhouse." In killed became a mystery for I from AIDS and there was no I. "I think Si killed it," Zion said to me that they thought it

interventions, Newhouse allowed aggressive in the pursuit of big political tug-of-war with Bernstein Random House signed such as Bradford and John Jakes to such well-known political figures P. "Tip" O'Neill, Jr., and First I once paid for O'Neill's book was I-two nonfiction best-seller, but Iagan reportedly was never re- I the First Lady's book.

I publishing upset some agents I Si Newhouse's ear during this Ious: He wanted to get the most Iarge advance. What was more Ial acquaintance of Newhouse, I 1985, Janklow hinted publicly I a great publishing house, no Ial with on the personal level.

But there's still not a great deal of flexibility there." Janklow's carefully worded dart was aimed at Bernstein and the haughty kind of attitude Random House displayed in rejecting *Scruples* by Judith Krantz—an entertainingly salacious tale of little redeeming social value (despite the fact it spent thirty-six weeks on the best-seller list after Janklow sold it to another publisher for a measly fifty thousand dollars). Bernstein's lack of enthusiasm for large advances and the general disinterest of Random House editors in acquiring the widely popular pulp novelists—almost displaying an elitist disdain—stirred Janklow and others to point out privately to Si Newhouse what he was missing.

Within the industry, Jason Epstein, the brilliant and mercurial editorial director of "Little Random," as the flagship imprint is called in the company, was known to have declined some books that later became best-sellers, including *Mayor* by Edward I. Koch. Such works, it was reasoned, were not of the quality Random House traditionally published, and their authors not of the caliber Epstein was accustomed to editing, such as Gore Vidal, E. L. Doctorow, and Norman Mailer. When actress Shirley MacLaine offered *Out on a Limb*, her first opus on her extrasensory experiences, which later became an out-of-this world best-seller, Epstein firmly rejected it. "Did I know it was going to sell? Sure I did," Epstein said afterward, without a moment of self-doubt. "But I took one look at that book and saw that it was madness—*mishigoss* about coming from another planet. Being Cleopatra's best friend . . . the woman was obviously disturbed. That's millions of dollars of business we didn't do, but I've never had a moment of regret."

By the summer of 1984, Epstein was asked to stay at Random House as a top editor but relinquish his powers as publisher. In his place, Bernstein agreed with Newhouse to offer the position to Howard Kaminsky, the former chief of Warner Books, who had a flair for signing up commercial novelists and big-name books. A fast-paced and sometimes pungent conversationalist, Kaminsky rapidly developed a social relationship with Si Newhouse, which he liked to characterize as friendship. Kaminsky had a refreshing directness—what might be called street smarts in his native Brooklyn—that appealed to Newhouse. Kaminsky blended his aggressive tendencies ("a plunger," as Bernstein later described him) with humor in a way reminiscent of his older cousin, comedian Mel Brooks. He didn't seem as intellectually threatening or portentous as other Random House editors and his tastes in film and art were similar to Newhouse's.

Kaminsky was willing to take chances, the kind of calculated big-money gambles that Si wanted for his publishing company. He wasn't shy, either, about letting Newhouse know his thoughts about Random House's management. During their Four Seasons luncheons together, Bernstein noticed Newhouse's questions were becoming more detailed, as if he was being briefed about the company by others. "Si loved detail and got more and

Vitale and other editors said the dispute was simply a matter of finances. But some who know Si Newhouse and his private conservative outlook say he was undoubtedly ill at ease with some of Pantheon's offerings. "I think that what I've seen and heard—about the whole thing with Pantheon—is that the guy [Schiffrin] was some radical liberal guy and he simply got nuts, and he got everyone to think he was nuts," said Si's son Wynn in an interview months afterward. "There was no justification for running the company into the ground. Personally, I think he was in left field. They were writing and publishing a lot of erudite books and no one was buying them."

When he was pressed for an answer by the press, Si Newhouse—as he had when he ousted William Shawn from *The New Yorker* three years earlier—dismissed the Pantheon conflict as nothing more than a petulant reaction. "Change appears threatening and it takes a while to see what it means," Newhouse told the *Times*. "But it is surprising how much more there is to an institution like *The New Yorker* or an imprint like Pantheon than an individual. I can see why people are upset, but they do not realize that Pantheon will continue as a strong intellectual imprint."

Perhaps the most curious response, above all, was the reaction inside Random House itself. Several senior editors felt insulted, embarrassed, or personally challenged by what they perceived was the self-righteousness of Schiffrin and the Pantheon editors in leaving. One of the most outraged was Jason Epstein, one of New York's great literary lions, a founder of *The New York Review of Books* and a highly regarded book editor for such luminaries as Mailer and Doctorow. Those who watched Epstein and Schiffrin at company meetings over the years say these two talented editors seemed to resent each other deeply and jockeyed for the intellectual high ground. "He never liked André," said one person who is friendly with both men. "Jason thought he was the house intellectual and there was a tension between them."

Epstein didn't mince words about Schiffrin and his approach at Pantheon. "He didn't know what he was doing; he was very unprofessional," said Epstein. "He always lost money and Bob Bernstein always carried him."

In turn, Schiffrin said Epstein carried favor with the new management so he could tend to his outside interests. With just one entrepreneurial venture, Epstein had reportedly collected up to \$1 million when *The New York Review of Books* was sold to another owner. "People no longer think of him as the one you go to with a serious intellectual book," Schiffrin replied.

A week before the ax fell at Pantheon, Epstein's essay in the *Review* detailed the new financial pressures facing book publishers. To some, it seemed like an apologia for Newhouse and his company's budget-cutting moves. Indeed, Vitale, the new chairman, photocopied Epstein's essay when it appeared and distributed it to the staff as "one of the best things

I've ever read about publishing for the Pantheon moves, to draft a letter and to call on editors and officials to sign this agreement. The letter was signed. "Like Pantheon, we all signed," the letter stated. "But, unlike Pantheon, and the independence of our publishing program with Random House."

Epstein wrote the letter. Peter Gethers, then the president of Random House, being on the management side, was an attack on my imprint in terms of money," recalled Gethers. "I signed it unless you think Studs Terkel and said we've got to respect the independence of publishing have been to ignore it and deal with all these people for the good of the house."

Some Random House editors saw an anti-intellectual act that would hurt the house. While some liked the statement, others felt uncomfortable. "When something ugly happens, you don't stink yourself," said one person. "A few inside the building thought it was rough, though, and people don't like a loyalty oath."

Among some of the editors, it was a "festive," as Epstein called it. Epstein says he and other editors at Fox, who had worked for Random House, were deeply offended. "I didn't want to see it abused by someone else," Epstein explained. The controversy involved estimated emotions and money. "Much of it was a delay in the process," Epstein said.

Yet Bernstein said he understood the others who signed the letter. "I know why they had to do it," he said. "It's only a financially responsible response. It's not enough for an editor to sign a letter if you have to give them a letter back."

Once brimming with confidence, it was emblematic of the character of the chairman.

here for about five years," he complained. "So I'm really just off the boat in more senses than one." The rancor surrounding Sonny Mehta peaked when Knopf authors Robert K. Massie and J. Anthony Lukas left in a huff. *The New York Times*, sensing the confusion and funereal mood at Knopf, called Mehta an "abysmal" manager. The deathwatch was on. The phone call from Si, requesting an impromptu good-bye, appeared imminent. "There were dark forces at work," recalled Howard Kaminsky years later. "People who did not want to see Sonny succeed and who were stirring the pot, throwing in tongue of newt and toe of snail and not doing him any good."

Sometimes in private, Mehta let his own displeasure with Bernstein be known. Quietly, Bernstein was rumored to be shopping around for a replacement at Knopf, but instead, he got the ax in November 1989. A friend sent Mehta a postcard with a photograph of a mobster rubbed out in some gangland-type murder. The message was clear: Mehta had dodged the bullets for now. "It would have been a good way to go down in history if I'd lost my job for not returning phone calls," Mehta said, bemused and bemoaning his reputation.

When Vitale was appointed as new chairman, Mehta flourished and became a vocal proponent of Random House's new bottom-line ethos demanded by Newhouse. "Knopf is solidly profitable and that is how I intend to keep it," he told the *Times* in a glowing 1990 profile only two years after its critical article on his managerial ability. "Profit is one way that you can take pride in the way you publish things and insure that you can go on doing it. . . . We try to sell our writers as aggressively as those houses regarded as commercial with a capital C." In turn, Vitale found an ally in the Knopf publisher; they were both European-trained executives running one of America's best-known publishing houses. After the Pantheon fiasco, with the departure of Schiffrin and his band of editors, Vitale turned to Mehta to oversee that troubled imprint, as well as Knopf. The new company chairman praised Mehta as "without question the most brilliant publisher in the country: he is phenomenal, he has everything."

What Mehta possessed mostly was the ability to mix Knopf's highbrow fare with the keen sensibilities he had developed as a paperback publisher in Britain. His sense of story and of the American public's taste were remarkable, especially for a man who had spent nearly all his life outside of the United States. Growing up in India, Mehta had read American writers like James Baldwin, Truman Capote, William Styron, and Norman Mailer and found their voices refreshing. "They just appeared to be speaking more directly to me than anything else," Mehta said. "It was a brand-new world, less recorded, more accessible." Mehta's business acumen and his sense of marketing were just as keen. His decision to raise the suggested price from forty to fifty dollars for *The Civil War*—a Knopf book that was tied directly to the highly praised public-television documentary of the same name—would raise millions more in revenues for the company.

At heart, Mehta was unabashedly practical. He brought the trappings of the cutthroat publishing industry to Knopf (he had worked in the industry) that had been used for some books in a smaller, more intimate format. More importantly, Mehta had a keen eye for art and graphic design, careful attention to detail, and an equal concern for the dust jacket design. The result resulted in books that looked like they were designed to increase sales considerably. "For every book we sell, we have to find other ways to sell it," he said in a 1991 interview, during which he took a hard-nosed approach. "Everyone moves on to the next thing for everything we do. And we don't look back."

One of Mehta's most remarkable achievements was with Josephine Hart's erotic novel *The Girl on the Train*, which he and served for the next few years as a model of innovation for rival publishers. "I don't think we've ever had books," said Laurence J. Kirso, who had been the smaller format proved to be a success. "I give Sonny a lot of credit for realizing that a book's design, equally as important as its success was a grand symphony of the book appearing on *The New York Times* before most of the reviews appeared—written by first-time novelist of Saatchi & Saatchi, the giant letter from Mehta himself. He had a keen eye for the erotic novel" his Knopf editors had to the schlocky potboilers that had ruined the regal reputation than Knopf. "It was essentially beside the point. That was a striking double-page ad in *The New York Times* winner, even though critics were skeptical. The letter staking his reputation, that was a brilliant performance. The House editor observed.

The book party for Hart's novel became another triumph when it was placed by the changes at his company and even posed with a wide halo. Hart. Signed up with a sixty-thousand-copy run formed by Mehta into best-seller.

sophistication, with traces of smoke from his English cigarette underlining his gestures.

For all of his fidelity to the boss, however, McDonald hardly seemed a candidate for Si Newhouse's fast track. His first brush with notoriety was as the editor for imprisoned convict Jack Henry Abbott, helping to transform Abbott's prison letters to novelist Norman Mailer into a book. In 1981, McDonald was partying with the recently released Abbott on the night before a rave newspaper review appeared about his book, *In the Belly of the Beast*. That same night, Abbott killed a man in a fight outside a bar, setting off a howl of indignation by those who felt a homicidal maniac had somehow been freed as a sort of literary cause célèbre. Inside the company, McDonald also earned a fair degree of criticism when he bumped into actor Klaus Kinski at a party and offered him \$250,000 to write his autobiography. The actor's manuscript, entitled *All I Need Is Love: A Memoir* contained a reported 162 sexual encounters, complete with the names of participants and body parts. McDonald's decision to bypass the company's lawyers on the potentially libelous manuscript set off a chain reaction of recriminations with his then boss, Joni Evans, including the discovery that a rough version of the same book had already appeared in Germany. When the German publisher threatened to sue, the entire project was dropped.

Ironically, McDonald's greatest achievement at Vintage Books was in starting a line of international paperback reprints and new titles, including *Aké: The Years of Childhood* by Wole Soyinka, who won the Nobel Prize in 1986. This line, called *Adventura*, wound up being killed by Sonny Mehta because he found it too esoteric and too costly. Schiffrin's somewhat-similar fare at Pantheon—and his seemingly charmed life within Random House's management hierarchy—undoubtedly upset McDonald. McDonald viewed Schiffrin as condescending and contemptuous. "I came to see this man in his office one day," he recalled, "and he condescended to me in a manner that I will neither forgive nor forget. Ever." Few believed McDonald when he said this resentment wasn't behind his criticisms of Schiffrin. Soon afterward, though, McDonald received his own lessons on the perils of bottom-line publishing when he sought the life story of television talk-show star Oprah Winfrey.

For years, McDonald had pushed Oprah to write her autobiography, until she finally made some sort of a commitment in 1992. The exact language of the deal was never made clear publicly. (Winfrey reportedly signed a letter of agreement but not a formal book contract.) Nevertheless, with visions of a big book for the 1993 holiday season dancing in their heads, a ghostwriter for the memoir was secured and McDonald, as the editor for the project, kept in constant contact with Winfrey. He even convinced her to make an appearance at the annual American Booksellers Association convention in Miami in the spring of 1993, only a few months before her book was expected to hit the stores. At this shindig, McDonald

and Mehta turned the company's publicity would be a huge bonanza, the bookstore printing expected at about 750,000 copies, a book but a humongous one. Winfrey was a conventioneer and feted at a grand party company. Oprah's as-told-to would sum up a million, the company's bean counters predicted. These great expectations were perhaps shattered at the convention, Oprah experienced a change of heart. To do the book, she announced, even though the book was already completed. If anything, the CBA convention convinced Oprah not to do it.

"I am in the heart of the learning curve," she released to the press by McDonald's boss. "I am in the heart of the learning curve of important discoveries yet to be made. I am not ready to finish her autobiography yet. I am going on in her life, including things she wants to include," her spokeswoman said. The book was halted. Given Winfrey's popularity, her readers could wait a lifetime for it.

The TV star's last-minute pullout from Random House's company, especially for McDonald, was an object of rampant second-guessing. How could Knopf make such a deal? Hadn't signed a contract? The revelation would be felt at the end of the year. Knopf would try to account for the black hole in the stunted advancement of McDonald's House. Somehow, Sonny Mehta escaped his role in the Oprah deal. He seemed to have proved that once again when that deal fell through. Knopf included a free pair of tasseled slippers in the next issue of *New York* magazine asked.

The reputation of the old Random House was Bennett Cerf's company perceived as a freedom in the face of repressive orthodoxy. Under Si Newhouse, the company published as Sonny Mehta, the publisher, associated with extravagant promotional tactics, titillation and graphic violence exploited for their mass-market ventures. Imprints like Knopf still published with a physical appearance that longed quite the same place of

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Brown wasn't willing to give up without a fight. She knew there was more advertising in the pipeline and a number of upcoming stories—including the Reagan cover story—which she was confident would draw some attention. If only she could convince Newhouse to hang on a little longer.

"Please just give us a few more issues," Brown pleaded, reeling off a number of reasons why it was still premature to kill *Vanity Fair*. "We can do it. We can turn this around."

Brown's hunch proved correct. That month's *Vanity Fair*—the June 1985 issue with the cover of the first couple fox-trotting and the headline **THE REAGAN STOMP**—drew a great deal of media attention, with both the usual pantlike praise in the gossip columns and the indignant scorn of Reagan's detractors. Before the photos were printed, Nancy Reagan had socialite Jerry Zipkin, whom Tina once described as Mrs. Reagan's "walker," inquire within *Vanity Fair* about whether the White House portraits would be flattering. The First Lady's office was assured not to worry, with good reason—the whole issue of *Vanity Fair* seemed devoted to the Reagans and their friends.

Like a time capsule just waiting to be plucked off the newsstand and buried for some later species to dissect, study, and deconstruct, the June 1985 edition proved to be a veritable encyclopedia of the eighties, that decade of unmatched greed, avarice, and unabashed social climbing. "The Women You Want to Sit Next To" was one picture essay, which listed some sixty-five of the most socially desirable women and offered an essay devoted to their wealth and pedigree. In her own way, Brown was like some latter-day de Tocqueville, consorting with the natives and memorializing their social customs. Every name in this issue seemed made of bold print, those celebrity and society names found sprinkled throughout the gossip columns. Indeed, Liz Smith, who was courted assiduously by Brown, was pictured in this issue tap-dancing and wearing a tux. Everyone was there: Brooke Astor, Norman Mailer, Cornelia Guest, Roy Cohn, Diane Sawyer, Rupert Murdoch, the crowd at Mortimer's, Bill Paley, Joan Juliet Buck, Betsy Bloomingdale, Bill Blass, Nan Kempner, Taki Theodoracopulos, and, of course, Jerry Zipkin.

To wrap it all together, the Reagan photo spread was accompanied by an adoring essay about the first couple's enduring romance, written by that sonneteer of the far right, William F. Buckley, Jr. "People curious to know how it is between the man and wife dancing together on the cover of *Vanity Fair* this month are going to have to put to one side their political feelings and recognize that that is the way they are," Buckley gushed.

The party-pooper Left, as usual, was appalled. The entire issue "was one of the most repulsive objects I have ever seen—all the more distasteful because it represents the cynical calculation of *Vanity Fair*'s young British editor, Tina Brown," wrote Alexander Cockburn, who declared the new

ance to define *fin de siècle* America the *Vanity Fair* captured the '20s."

She was convinced that *Vanity Fair* had a better chance of surviving much initial consternation, the magazine's management. "The only thing *Vanity Fair* gave me was a crown," Newhouse admitted. At Brown's insistence, she made an expensive investment in a satellite magazine. The stories could be filed on deadline, giving *Vanity Fair* a news approach than ever before. *Vanity Fair*'s circulation soared, from a low of 220,000 to nearly 1 million, with each issue usually containing much more advertising. As the press became less critical of Hollywood's way, she slowly began to widen the magazine's pieces of journalism among the mix of Hollywood covers and stories about celebrities, although now joined by more in-depth reports on politics, business, and such social issues as AIDS. One of the most notable forays was a series of presidential candidate profiles by Gail Sheehy. She noted her analytic psychological approach, the magazine's sexual adventures of the Democratic Party, and the sexual adventures of the Democratic Party, were explored in Sheehy's profile, which became a key criteria among the mainstream media.

Change in the public's attitudes, away from the 1980s and toward an indebted nation chasing the American dream, "I am fed up with the money culture of the 1980s," she said when she wrote the magazine in 1988 by *Advertising Age*. "We have to do serious stuff. The serious stuff is the fun pieces." Suddenly interrupting the fun pieces were covers featuring Jesse Jackson (a politician not in show business or sports to Brown's tenure) and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. Gorbachev's selection for the cover by Ellen Barkin and her agent when they were inside. Barkin claimed she had been asked to sue. "I felt that month Gorbachev was a more important world affairs than Ellen Barkin. She and I explained later, carefully putting in words that had been heinous, but I felt that she couldn't have been able to explain it to her friends." Brown's *Vanity Fair* still relied on her band

of star writers and old friends from England, such as editors Miles Chapman and Sarah Giles, and added a few more names, like Nancy Collins and Kevin Sessums, to provide those chatty, gushing cover stories. (Sessums, the magazine's "fanfair editor," who authored some remarkably fawning portraits of such Hollywood icons as Sylvester Stallone, described Brown's idea of a good story with this simple rule: "If it makes Tina's nipples firm, then she goes with it.") Another marquee name, Norman Mailer, was added to the cast like some cameo role in the autumn of his career. Mailer made occasional appearances, with long-winded rants as the magazine's writer at large—ranting with murderous invective about Bret Easton Ellis's *American Psycho* or ranting favorably about Oliver Stone, a like-minded conspirator of the cinema. "JFK is bound to receive some atrocious reviews, perhaps even a preponderance of unfavorable ones, and as has been the case already, more than a small outrage is likely to be aroused in the Washington Club (that is, *The Washington Post*, *Newsweek*, *Time*, the F.B.I., the C.I.A., the Pentagon, the White House, and the TV networks on those occasions when they wish to exercise their guest privileges)," Mailer wailed in February 1992 as the new movie debuted. For faceless billionaires, part of the fun was employing Mailer to bludgeon in print. "He called me and said, 'I love the magazine and I'd love to be in it,'" recalled Brown, who said *Vanity Fair*'s deal was separate from Mailer's financial arrangements with other parts of the Newhouse organization.

Despite these necessary indulgences to attract an audience, Brown launched an effort to steer the magazine slowly, like some oversized party boat, in a slightly different direction, toward a more serious tone that would reflect the times. She enlisted such fine business and cultural reporters as Peter Boyer and Leslie Bennetts, both formerly with *The New York Times*. Although Hollywood's top powers sometimes seemed to serve as an escort service for *Vanity Fair*'s front cover, inside the magazine there were now exquisitely detailed dissections by Boyer of deal making and behind-the-scenes maneuvering at such communication giants as MCA, Sony, CNN, and Walt Disney Studios. "If we said on the cover, Peter Boyer with the inside story at Sony, it wasn't some weak piece of flimflam that we put together from the clips," Brown later said. "It was a really good inside story that Hollywood would be surprised by."

Leslie Bennetts, a talented writer, would offer profiles on feminist Gloria Steinem and such entertainers as dancer Gregory Hines, but she was also a serious-enough journalist to probe into such delicate subjects as pedophilia in the Catholic Church and the failed policies of drug czar William Bennett. "I think Tina was very quick to realize that the 1980s were over—or were going to be over, before they were over—and she's been very interested in and very supportive of serious work. I don't do puff-piece movie star profiles," said Bennetts, a *Times* reporter for more than a decade. "She was very interested in going after people like me and

3-news approach than ever before. *Vanity Fair*, from a low of 220,000 to nearly 1 million, with each issue usually containing much more interesting. As the press became less critical in its way, she slowly began to widen the pieces of journalism among the mix of Hollywood covers and stories about sports, although now joined by more in politics, business, and such social issues of AIDS. One of the most notable forums of presidential candidate profiles by Galbraith and her analytic psychological approach. Her sexual adventures of the Democratic Party, were explored in Sheehy's profile, after a key criteria among the mainstream presidents.

Change in the public's attitudes, away from the 1980s and toward an indebted nation characterized by "I am fed up with the money culture of the magazine reflects that," she said when she was in 1988 by *Advertising Age*. "We have to do serious stuff. The serious stuff is to the fun pieces." Suddenly interrupting the fun pieces were covers featuring Jesse Jackson (a man not in show business or sports to cover his tenure) and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev (of the Jesse Jackson cover are not good, it was said. Gorbachev's selection for the cover by Ellen Barkin and her agent when they were inside. Barkin claimed she had been asked to sue. "I felt that month Gorbachev's world affairs than Ellen Barkin. She and I had explained later, carefully putting in a name Ellen Barkin off the cover in favor of Ellen Barkin. I felt that she had been able to explain it to her friends." Barkin's *Vanity Fair* still relied on her brand

career. Mailer made occasional appearances, with long-winded rants as the magazine's writer at large—ranting with murderous invective about Bret Easton Ellis's *American Psycho* or ranting favorably about Oliver Stone, a like-minded conspirator of the cinema. "JFK is bound to receive some atrocious reviews, perhaps even a preponderance of unfavorable ones, and as has been the case already, more than a small outrage is likely to be aroused in the Washington Club (that is, *The Washington Post*, *Newsweek*, *Time*, the F.B.I., the C.I.A., the Pentagon, the White House, and the TV networks on those occasions when they wish to exercise their guest privileges)." Mailer waited in February 1992 as the new movie debuted. For faceless billionaires, part of the fun was employing Mailer to blow up in print. "He called me and said, 'I love the magazine and I'd love to be in it.'" recalled Brown, who said *Vanity Fair*'s deal was separate from Mailer's financial arrangements with other parts of the Newhouse organization.

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Insert on Rupert Murdoch where his deal with Gingrich appears.

Rupert Murdoch is not like the other empire builders who got to be big in the media. He began life ~~in~~ in Australia as a Leninist, opposed to ~~the~~ exceptionally wealthy capitalists ^{which} he became. This was treated at length in a PBS "Frontline" program telecast the night of November 7, 1995. Here are a few excerpts from the Lloyd Grove preview in that day's Washington Post. It begins by saying that Murdoch "is a refreshing throwback to the age of capitalist robber barons. ... an empire builder who began his hegemony four decades ago in his native Australia as the owner of a piddling newspaper (a bequest from his wealthy father) and today controls not only a major American television network [Fox], publishing house and movie studio, but also an international satellite service and a string of influential newspapers and magazines on three continents.

"...Murdoch has managed to bend governments to his will, warp journalism into a form of cheap entertainment, ~~pollute~~ ^{the} popular culture and even sever his Australian roots to become a U.S. citizen - all in a tireless quest for power and profit."

He "seems to have been allowed to grow unchecked," has "voracious acquisitiveness" and "has the ability to extract favors from the powers that be."

"This makes no direct reference to ~~his~~ ^{any} deals with Gingrich like that \$4.5 million contract for the book Gingrich had yet to write after he was elected Speaker of the House and had become, in effect, the dictator of the Congress.

Not does it say that Murdoch spoke to Gingrich about the favors he could use from the government.

Which he did somehow manage to get.

~~And~~ ^{mean while} Gingrich is favored with attention on Fox news.

In his The Accidental President (Grossman Publishers, New York, 1967) Robert Sherrill writes about a Johnson^a administration campaign to get rid of mildly liberal JFK appointees and of Knight's collaboration in ~~them~~^{this} with President^{al} Assistant Marvin Watson and J. Edgar Hoover. What was "notorious," Sherrill writes, was the elimination of Abba P. Schwartz...as administrator of the State Department's Bureau of Security and Consular Affairs. ...But peering through the Schwartz keyhole ~~were~~^p Watson and Mrs. Frances Knight, head of the Passport Office, who carries on a secret pen-palmsmanship with J. Edgar Hoover in which they discuss subversive tendencies and suspicious persons within the government..." pages 134-5).

(It is not easy to believe that Knight, who was so diligent in branding New Deal officials of higher rank as subversive and equating some with Communism while she was a lower-level employee of that same New Deal administration that to her as ~~sub~~ subserving and a danger to the country and believe that under her that passport office would have conducted no inquiry at all before ~~gr~~^a granting Oswald his second passport and the singling him out as the only one of those New Orleans passport applicants to be the only one of all of them to get his passport overnight. The implication that he was getting special and favorable attention cannot be missed in this. How can it be ignored that if this ^{favorable} was not the official intent it is passing strange that Knight neither fired nor disciplined anyone (if what she regarded as a mistake was made without authorization.)

for Foreword

If we examine the books sycophantic of the official JFK assassination and its investigations, all of which are inevitable dishonest in major degrees;

From the puny and pathetic David Belin's efforts at self-justification whose work enjoys a special dishonesty because he was privy to the Commission's work and much of the FBI's and, poor man, because he was so welcome to the major media he had limitless opportunities to proclaim his irrefutability and purity and he was neither;

Gerald Posner's

To the most effectively corrupt and dishonest, knowing and ~~deliberately~~ deliberately mistitled Case Closed, his cheap prosecution-type briefs achieved by ~~his~~ what in my Case Open, using his own publisher's unabridged dictionary's definitions I decried to his silence as plagiarism and shysterism and by manufacturing evidence and ignoring the contrary evidence of which he knows *he establish his pre-eminence in assassination media*

^{no} one is as vicious on the personal level as Norman Mailer, cheap and phony novel he pretends is nonfiction, in which he just assumes Oswald's guilt and thus ignores all the actual evidence, as Mailer's Oswald's Tale, which is actually Mailer's Tales.

In terms of viciousness and mendacity in fabricating it Mailer's contrived, stupid and essentially boring book is in a class by itself.

His chief victim, other than our tragic history, is Marina ^{Porter} Oswald (who was herself a victim of the assassination. What he says of her is scurrilous and his false evidence was to his knowledge false, coming from a man ~~whom~~ Mailer himself described as a world-class liar, "prodigious" liar.

For anyone, a man in particular and a much-honed writer at that, to assail this woman who did nothing at all, to write of her as he did, is subhuman and deserved of the greatest possible condemnation. It is, in fact, self-condemnation.

calendar for 1998

3 MONDAY

4 TUESDAY

5 WEDNESDAY

Marguerite Duras born 1914

EAT _____

EAT _____

EAT _____

10 LITERARY SCANDALS

- 1 September 7, 1911: Guillaume Apollinaire, the poet and critic who coined the term "surrealism," is jailed in Paris, suspected of masterminding the theft of the *Mona Lisa* from the Louvre. He spent nine days in prison before being cleared. Apollinaire's guilt was surmised because he and his friend Pablo Picasso had earlier hidden statuettes stolen from the Louvre by the thief suspected in the *Mona Lisa* robbery. When authorities found all kinds of paintings and statues (not stolen) in Apollinaire's apartment, he was arrested. Later, in court, Picasso denied any part in the affair and, to Apollinaire's astonishment, denied that he even knew the poet.
- 2 August 13, 1944: Lucien Carr, a 19-year-old friend of Jack Kerouac, kills Dave Kammerer after Kammerer makes a homosexual advance. Kammerer, who goes down in Beat history as the man who introduced Kerouac to William S. Burroughs, had been following Carr around for years and Carr tended to humor him. The night of the murder Kammerer and Carr were drinking in New York City's Riverside Park when Carr fought off Kammerer's advance with a Boy Scout knife. Carr threw the body into the Hudson Riv-

er and went to Kerouac's apartment to ask for help. Kerouac accompanied Carr as he threw the knife down a subway grate. When Kammerer's body was found, Kerouac and Burroughs were booked as material witnesses. (Kerouac married his first wife, Edie Parker, while he was in prison.) Carr was sentenced to a state reformatory for two years and later had a long career at the Associated Press. He is now best known as the father of novelist Caleb Carr (*The Alienist*).

- 3 September 6, 1951: In the second Beat scandal, William S. Burroughs accidentally shot and killed his wife, Joan Vollmer Burroughs, in Mexico, where the family had moved in 1951. Reportedly, Burroughs and his wife were playing William Tell. Burroughs spent two weeks in a Mexican jail before being released on bail. The shooting was ruled accidental, but only after Joan's death did Burroughs begin to consider himself a writer.
- 4 November 20, 1960: During the early morning hours, at a "beatnik" party for 200 people in his home, author Norman Mailer stabbed wife Adele Morales in the abdomen and back, leaving her in crit-

ical condition. Party guests reportedly included Allen Ginsberg and Delmore Schwartz. Mailer was arrested for the crime the next day and committed to Bellevue Hospital for observation. Although Morales, mother of two of Mailer's children, admitted to police that Mailer had been her assailant, she later changed her mind and refused to sign a complaint, stating in court that they were "perfectly happy together." Mailer was indicted in spite of this and pleaded guilty on March 9, 1961, subsequently receiving a suspended sentence. The Mailers were divorced a year later.

- 5 January 7, 1972: McGraw-Hill (hardcover publisher), Dell (which bought paperback reprint rights), *Life* (which was to run excerpts), and Book-of-the-Month Club (main selection plans) found they had all been duped by author Clifford Irving, who had sold what he purported to be an autobiography of Howard Hughes and for which he had already been paid \$700,000. The hoax was discovered when Howard Hughes himself denied its authenticity. Irving, who had been a trusted McGraw-Hill author for 12 years, had fabricated the 230,000-word manuscript he claimed had been based on taped interviews with Hughes. He served time in jail for the hoax.
- 6 October 19, 1980: While reading a new novel, *Wild Oats*, by 23-year-old Jacob Epstein, son of Random House Editorial Director Jason Epstein, Mar-

Contents

- I Mailer The West Ocean
- II Mailer The Art of Consistency
- III Mailer's Assassination Home
- IV Mailer, Du K & B's Dostoyevsky
- V Schiller, Du K & B's Informer
- VI Schiller Records History - Schiller's Way
- VII Schiller The Scavenger
- VIII The "Hutter" is "The Larcenous Bird", "The Ultimate Abscency", and "Too Unusual to Write"
- IX Buy my M & B
- X What M & B Sold - a Bill of Goods

CORRECTION AT FIRST MENTION OF THE NUMBER OF BOOKS FOR WHICH MAILER IS INDEBTED
TO SCHILLER AND NUMBER CORRECTION TO FOUR ON ALL SUBSEQUENT MENTIONS

correct
Novelist John W. Aldridge's review of Oswald's Tale for The Atlantic Monthly, issue
of May, 1995, says almost nothing about that book and when it does it says that
Aldridge's major qualification for writing the review was his ignorance about the
assassination and that, with mailer, he merely assumes that Oswald as the assassin,
In most of the five single^{spaced} spaced typewritten pages of his review Aldridge takes almost
~~some~~ organic satisfaction in extolling Mailer and all he has ever written instead
of assessing what to anyone not luxuriating in ~~Aldridge~~ Aldridge's ignorance is the
~~so~~ pathetic Mailer's Tales.

Note: if a list of Mailer's work is used there is one in the book and attached to the
copy of the ^lreview, in the ["]review file, from ["]Dennis MacDonald is the online list of
"The Principal Works of Norman Mailer."

Mary McHughes Ferrell
4406 Holland Ave.
Dallas, TX 75219-2133
(214) 528-0716

May 17, 1995

Mr. and Mrs. Harold Weisberg
Route 12
Frederick, MD 21701

Dearest Harold and Lil,

I guess I'm getting better. I'm still having trouble walking and my hip and back hurt all the time, but I'm not as depressed as I was. So many people have been so wonderful and caring (among the most important are you and Lil) and I realized that it really doesn't matter what a few people think. Most of those people haven't really contributed anything toward our work except confusion.

Of course, I was disappointed in Norman Mailer's book. When he first approached me about three years ago and asked if I would help him, I asked what he was going to write. I asked if he was going to do it in a novel or in non-fiction. I asked if he was going to say that Oswald acted alone or that he was not certain and, at least, point to the many contradictions in the official record. To every question, Norman answered that he did not know. He said he had an open mind and wanted to really examine all the documents. He did say that he was going to have access to KGB documents in Russia. I agreed to help him if I could.

I sent him everything he asked for over the next couple of years. Considering the documentation I sent him, I felt that he could do nothing but conclude that President Kennedy was assassinated as the result of a conspiracy. You've seen the results.

Oh, well! John Newman told me night-before-last that his book would be in my hands next week. I haven't done anything to help him since the first of February. I guess that is my last hope that any of my work will have been used properly.

Poor little Carol Anne has been here five times since February 1st. She has been here every three or four weeks and she does the laundry, stocks the refrigerator and pantry, gets all our prescriptions refilled (about \$1,400.00 every month -- and we are not eligible for Medicaid). Buck has one glass of red wine a day and I have one glass of white wine. Carol Anne has more wine stored in my back room than they have in many small liquor stores. They do have me on a strict diet. After I got to the point where I couldn't walk, I just seemed to eat, sleep and sit. I gained up to 185 pounds. I looked like a blimp. Carol Anne arranged with some doctors who own a diet gourmet place out near

In all the many glorifications of M^{ail}er and his book I have read, and friends have sent me many from all around the country, there is not a single review or commentary or news story reporting that Mailer's Tales was an ignominious failure despite the virtually unprecedent^{ed} Random House advertising and promotions of it. It is not so much that this is not news given M^{ail}er's reputation and his two Pulitzers or that it is not significant book news, with most newspaper having book sections. It is more than the Random House book publishing empire places many ads for which it pays those papers in which it places its ads.

Among the many useful and informative articles, reviews and commentaries sent me by my friend Hal Verb, who lives in San Francisco, is the Herb Caen column from the San Francisco Chronicle of Thursday, May 12. In it Caen reports:

The celebrated Norman M^{ail}er was a ~~Border's~~^{Border's} [book store] on Monday from noon to 2 p.m. y to ~~sign~~^{sign} his new one, 'Oswald,' and sold - 18 copies. In these sensitive times, Norman shouldn't be walking around with a bomb like that.'

indent
single
space

That so "celebrated" as writer as M^{ail}er sold so few books with a personal appearance, especially with all the hoopla about it in all the media, including both a long article and long review in that paper, is a simply astounding reflection of its failure, or its "bombing" in the phrase of the trade Caen used.

To give an idea of how much of a failure that was in San Francisco, thirty years earlier, I ^{also} spent two hours autographic books in what was then an independent book store, not part of a ~~major~~ major chain like Borders' ~~Paul Elders~~^{Paul Elders}. I had just published myself, without a cent to spend for advertising or promotions, my second book. ~~I also spent two hours at Elders~~^{two hundred and fifty}. He had ordered 250 copies. When they ~~disappeared~~ sold before that two hours was up he also sold the fifty copies I was carrying for press copies. All three hundred copies sold in less than two hours. *(I with no ads for my did not a word in any newspaper about that book.)*

The week after I had my first TV appearance in New York that summer, just after I'd published the first of the Whitewash series, several book stores there sold out three hundred copies in part of a day. I had to ship more copies of ~~Whitewash~~

"Whitewash to New York city three more times that single week."

a single
Whitewash to New York City wholesaler three more time that single week.

Without a penny to spend on advertising or promotion and without a single mention in any newspaper. This is in sharp contrast to Random House's enormous advertising and saturation promotions ^{despite which} ~~at~~ Mailer in that market. ^{bombed in San Francisco.}

So, naturally, Mailer blamed it all on unfavorable review/by ignorant reviewers who failed to recognize his brilliance and that of his bombing book.

Mailer likes comparing himself to Tolstoy. He does not always do this in his side-kick Schiller's name. He ~~said~~ ^{has} said, without quoting Schiller, that the ~~book~~ ^{reviews} spoke of him as the American Tolstoy. This came to light in an interview published in a small-town Sunday paper, the Asbury Park Press of Sunday, June 11. That it was not an exclusive interview is indicative of the monumental effort Random House made to sell the book that simply would not sell. (Asbury Park ~~Long Beach~~ is along the upper New Jersey coast toward New York City. It is near Long Beach, where Mailer was born.)

Here is how the paper's ^{staff} writer Steve Giegerich begins what amount to a promotion rather than a review or an interview:

*indirectly
single
issue*

...a disembodied voice belonging to one of several journalists on the line via a conference call hinted maybe, just maybe, the 24 years Lee Harvey Oswald spent on this Barth [sic] did not merit a book numbering 701 pages in ~~lost~~ length. Not including the appendix, [There is no appendix, not even an index]. Until that juncture the 72-year-old Mailer had been positively beatific, an avuncular Uncle Norman gently fielding the interrogation of ~~various~~ ~~literary~~ literary underlings. After all, these mired in the grind of daily journalism were unlikely to attain the status of 'American Tolstoy,' a monicker attached to Mailer by the Russians during his research on 'Oswald's Tale, An American Mystery.'

Giegerich also quotes this Mailer wisdom, "I find non-fiction much easier. ~~Mailer said,~~ "You can pick and chose with non-fiction. Plus you have the great advantage that God or providence wrote the story. And God or providence is a better novelist."

"Pick and chose" is what Mailer did, as we have seen endlessly. That alone makes it easier writing. But from Mailer's own picking and chosing of what he described as "The best interviews I ever did," it was hardly "God or providence" who "is a better novelist" in providing Mailer with his Yuri Mereshinsky (check spelling) ^{and he like} and neither "God nor providence" who wrote what Mailer did, for example, as we see it earlier in our several chapters of his ^{abuses} abuses of Marina Oswald Porter.

Saying, as usual, anything that at any time seems to him to ^{serve} his interests
Mailer provided those reporters on that conference-call interview with his own statement
of the fact that if Oswald was not the assassin, he had no book at all and thus,
without regard to evidence, he ordained Oswald the assassin.

Even Mailer admits that the transcripts ~~detailing~~ detailing the early
stages of Lee and Marina's relationship depict a 'very ordinary marriage of
two people, who, like many other people, are half in and half out of love
with each other...it reads like a ~~Samuel~~ Samuel Becket play.'

All modesty all over again, Mailer is not merely the American Tolstoy - he is
also Samuel Becket, too.

JOHN PAUL, SUPERSTAR

FROM **HIS HOLINESS: JOHN PAUL II AND THE HIDDEN HISTORY OF OUR TIME**, BY CARL BERNSTEIN AND MARCO POLITI. DOUBLEDAY. 582 PP. \$27.50.

John Paul II was the first pope to understand the television era, the first one who mastered the medium, who could handle a microphone, who was used to improvising, who wasn't afraid of performing in public.

Inevitably (and to his great advantage) a war of one-upmanship developed between a pope seeking to impress his audiences (aided by media advisers who were learning quickly) and TV reporters determined to make every broadcast an extraordinary event. Thus agents of the most skeptical and cynical mass media in the world wound up exalting the Roman pontiff in a manner previously unknown and on a scale unique to his person.

Masses celebrated by Pope Wojtyla became epic performances. Local organizers felt compelled to create more and more fantastic stage designs for his open-air events, turning the papal platforms on which John Paul II celebrated masses into gargantuan Hollywood sets . . .

But the pope, fully aware of the profane elements surrounding his appearances (which in richer countries were partly financed through the sale of papal souvenirs), realized that all



this was an opportunity for communication. He spoke in a dozen languages. He agreed to wear any of an incredible variety of hats that people offered him: student berets, Mexican sombreros, feathered Indian war bonnets, pith helmets. In Africa he put on goatskins and posed while grasping the spear of a tribal chieftain. In the American West he emerged from a tepee in a fringed chasuble; in Phoenix a group of Native Americans placed him on a revolving platform that turned him around like some sort of sacred wedding cake so that everyone in the audience

could see and admire him.

The papal entourage quickly came to favor this kind of atmosphere and spectacular hype. In keeping with the strategy of Joaquín Navarro-Valls, hired as the Vatican spokesman in 1984 — a former medical doctor, a correspondent for the Spanish newspaper *ABC*, and a member of Opus Dei — TV coverage was given preferential treatment. On the TV screen, as the pope and Navarro-Valls well understood, glory would invariably overshadow problems, emotion would overwhelm insight. Any uncomfortable questions from print reporters would be drowned out.

Bernstein is the Pulitzer Prize-winning co-author of All the President's Men. Politi has covered the papacy for the past nineteen years for Italy's La Repubblica and Il Messaggero.

FEAR AND FAVOR

FROM **NEWHOUSE: ALL THE GLITTER, POWER, AND GLORY OF AMERICA'S RICHEST MEDIA EMPIRE AND THE SECRETIVE MAN BEHIND IT**, BY THOMAS MAIER. JOHNSON PRESS. 464 PP. \$20. (introduction to the paperback edition)

When *Newhouse* won the 1995 "best media book" prize from the National Honor Society in Journalism and Mass Communication, my wife Joyce and I traveled to Washington, D.C., to attend the awards dinner.

After the ceremony, a journalism teacher living in New Jersey — where the Newhouse newspaper chain is dominant — came up to my table and mentioned that she had never heard of the book.

No wonder. This book, as much a parable about American media power as it is a biography of Si Newhouse's family organization, underlines the deep problem for a democratic society when so few companies, like the Newhouses'

Advance Publications, control what we learn about our world. My experiences with this book only served to illustrate the extent of this power.

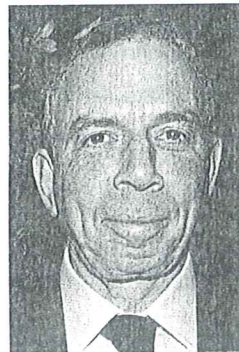
In effect, the Newhouse company banned any mention of this book in their publications. None of the Newhouse papers ever reviewed it. Undoubtedly, many people living in places like Cleveland, Portland [Oregon], New Orleans, and several other regions where Newhouse newspapers are dominant would be interested in knowing about who runs the only paper in town. Yet the Newhouse newspapers, the fourth largest chain in America, decided that it was best for their readers not to learn anything about the boss. When Liz Smith mentioned the upcoming *Newhouse* book as the lead item in her nationally syndicated column, none of the subscrib-

ing Newhouse newspapers used it, according to a computerized newspaper search.

Several writers confided they had thoughts of writing about Newhouse's power but were too afraid to do so. Most surprisingly, some top editors told me they couldn't express their opinions because they had signed a "gag agreement" not to discuss anything about the Newhouse organization even after they had left. The use of "gag agreements"

and other implicit threats for speaking one's mind (similar to the restrictions in the tobacco industry for those who would speak out) seems extraordinary for a company which has reaped a fortune by employing the First Amendment.

Maier, a business and investigative reporter, has worked for Newsday since 1984.



schiller duck
m. in
Phila, 1967