

Saturday 16 April 1966

Mr Edward Epstein  
35 Broadway  
Cambridge, Mass

Dear Ed,

Aaron Asher called me at my office on Thursday morning, to say that he will send me the page proofs by messenger, probably late Monday. He would like the index by the end of next week, but I told him I would try to have it finished by Wednesday, if possible. Unfortunately, the UN Social Commission is starting on Tuesday morning; it is one of my major assignments, requiring concentration and sometimes overtime work. If not for that, I would definitely finish the index by Wednesday; and I will try, by working during the night if necessary.

I mentioned to Asher that I believe that the Rovere introduction and the appendix or appendices should be indexed too; he doesn't seem to have strong feelings about that, one way or the other. I will have to see how much extra work that may require, when I get the page proofs. If it means delaying the book, I will not index those two parts.

Asher called my attention to the fact that I was wrong about the spelling of Dulles' first name, and he is quite right, to my chagrin. It is "Allen," as you had it originally. For some reason, I had a fixed mental picture of "Allan." Now I will have to go through my own manuscript and make the change; unfortunately, it is too late to change my subject index, which finally came out last Monday with the misspelled "Allan"!

Asher also told me to bill him for the index at the standard rate of \$3.50 an hour, saying that the payment would ultimately come off your royalties. I said that I would like if possible to make a private arrangement with you, and he said that was all right with him. The reasons why I did not feel willing to bill Asher, or Viking, are that first of all I have treated the index as a matter of urgency and probably will have put in far fewer hours, in the end, than any commercial indexer would have taken—I think that one to two weeks would normally be allowed. Second, my job pays me something over five dollars an hour, and I would not be willing to work after office hours at a lower rate, if I were working primarily for the money. And, third, if I bill Asher for maybe 30 hours at \$3.50 an hour and he pays me \$105, it will become reportable income and I will then have to pay at least \$50 of the \$105 in income taxes, since anything I earn over and above my UN salary becomes taxable at a very high percentage.

Rather than net \$55, I would be inclined to consider it a labor of love—which, in fact, it is, since I wholeheartedly want to do everything possible to expedite publication of what I am sure will be the most important of all the books published on the case. I would have no reservations about doing it that way—in fact, I would be more comfortable, in a sense, since I am always reluctant to become involved in commercial or financial dealings with my friends, or with any colleague on this case—it's always tricky and embarrassing, and you run the risk of bad feelings on one side or the other, or both. However, I recognize that you may not want to feel "obligated" by accepting the index on that basis.

Actually, I didn't keep track of the number of hours that I spent in preparing the cards and then the typewritten sheets for your index; and of course, I don't know yet how much time I will put in once I get the page proofs. Therefore, let me suggest (a) that we consider the index a labor of love, freely offered and without strings, or (b) that you get from Asher or any other publisher some typical costs for indexing of a comparable manuscript by a commercial free-lance indexer, since I should not be penalized for taking less time, and using those figures as a general guide, that you make me a "gift" of an appropriate amount, which I will not have to report as income.

Either (a) or (b) will be all right with me, Ed, so long as it is understood in the same spirit by both of us and doesn't result in any unspoken resentment on either side. That is why I have gone into detail and been very frank --I would like our present friendly collaboration to continue without being compromised by any money considerations.

Did you receive my chapter on Odio? You are welcome to read the whole section on the two Oswalds, next time you are here. I'll be interested in your comments or criticisms.

I made the mistake of telephoning Jones Harris the other night, thanks to a vague report from my niece that she had heard a fragment of a radio program in which she believed there was some mention of a book on the assassination by a Scandinavian. Since Jones knows EVERYONE and EVERYTHING (by definition) and since I was anxious to find out what kind of book might be involved, I called him against my better judgement. He was in a foul mood, because he had misplaced his eyeglasses, and instantly dismissed the alleged Scandinavian book as lacking any possible interest (I subsequently called the radio station and after much agonizing learned that it was a novel called "The Assignment" and had nothing to do with the assassination of JFK). He then said with the utmost nonchalance that "ED's book will be out in about a month," as if it was not a dead secret. I was rather nonplussed, not knowing whether to ask a lot of questions, thus pretending that I did not know anything about your book, or just say something innocuous, like "That's great!" I settled for the innocuous exclamation and Jones did not seem to realize that I should have been asking a lot of questions--at least asking who the publisher was.

Then he said that I knew, didn't I, that he had been to Dallas? No! I answered, you didn't tell me, Jones! He then proceeded to relate that Mark Lane had been there under a pseudonym, with DeAntonio (?), interviewing people on the pretext that they were doing a documentary when in fact Lane was only trying to grab a handful of money by doing a TV production... and that he, Jones, had put a spoke in Lane's wheel by calling people and telling them who he really was. I was really appalled that Jones should decide to play God that way and interfere so maliciously in other people's activities--and told him so, and said I hoped that he had not managed to prevent one or another of those witnesses from making an important disclosure, advertently or inadvertently, to Lane--which I suppose is always possible. Jones then proceeded with his usual foul-adjektival denunciation of Mark Lane, throwing in this time the incident of the attempted theft of your documents. Very good and true--but doesn't Jones really sink to the same level by his gratuitous and malicious interference?

I'm sorry I didn't get to see you again before you left--I wanted to return Lane's manuscript, among other things. When will you be back again?

Sincerely,