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May 28, 1966

Mr. Dave Ballinger
Liberation
5 Beekman St.
New York 38, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Ballinger,

In today's mail I have a copy of a letter to you from Vincent Salandria, dated May 28. On that morning I sent Mr. Salandria, at his request, a copy of my book by the special fourth-class book rate. With it was a letter dated the previous day, a friendly letter in response to his deceptively friendly letter of May 25. If you desire I will provide you with copies of this correspondence and any related correspondence.

I am entirely at a loss to understand what would seem to be Mr. Salandria's deceptiveness, what I would, as a non-lawyer, take to be his slanders and sneaky red-baiting and his complete departure from the fact of which he was informed and which he could readily have checked for himself.

I told him in my letter that the book was completed in mid-February 1965, except for a few minor additions. I have all my work. It is dated. I have all my own research, which is typed. I have the receipt from the bank in which, after completion of the book, I deposited a set of my notes for safekeeping. I have the correspondence with the publisher who broke his contract covering the mailing of every chapter of the book. I have records of the subsequent submission of the book to all ~~the~~ the more than 60 publishers in the United States alone to whom I offered it. I still have most of the tapes on which I made my ~~tapes~~ ^{talks}. These run for six hours each, and my estimate is that about 20 of them have still not been reused. My book was granted a copyright in the middle of last year.

A short time ago I received an even more venomous letter from Mr. Arnoni. I tell you this because the carbon Mr. Salandria sent me indicates a copy was sent to him. I presume it is not unfair to imply a connection. In reply to Mr. Arnoni on May 18 I cited his errors and answered them factually. As I said above, you may examine this correspondence. His reply of May 20 reads in its entirety, "I wish to answer each and every point you made not only in your letter to me but also in what is slowly becoming your notorious correspondence to others. All these answers are: Sir, you are mad."

Here, certainly, we have a new dimension in the employment of the intellect, a new concept of logic and reasoning.

I can only presume the basis of these miserable, personal and false attack upon me. But I can and I do assure you of the truth of what I say, and you can, if you accept my invitation - regard it as a challenge - confirm them for yourself.

Aside from this, there is the word of my wife, who typed all of my notes and my manuscript, but I presume such minds as have recently been revealed to me would presume anything she would say to be false. There then remains what I believe I can show you, although I cannot now take the time to check my files to confirm it, my approaches to major newspapers with my analysis of the report within a month of its issuance and my informing of a prominent public official of those things I was discovering as I discovered them.

Those of lesser energy or dedication may be unwilling to believe it, but I worked not less than 20 hours a day during the entire period I was working on my book. Many days I worked around the clock, without going to bed at all. My usual working day, in fact, was longer than 20 hours. I kept three tape machines, for the purchase of which I also have records, busy. I still work this way, although impaired by a few foul intrusions into my time and thought. Not one morning this week did I fail, to be at work by five a.m. at the latest, and I began as early as four. Not one night did I retire until after 11. By 10 o'clock this morning I had completed 18 pages of the draft of a magazine piece on this subject.

In all the time I was working on my book I do not believe I bought a single magazine, yours, Armoni's or any other. The earliest writing I can now recall having seen other than my own was Dwight Macdonald's Esquire piece, which I saw after I had finished my book in February 1965. The few copies of your and Armoni's magazines I have were given me by others after they read them. And even examination of these, especially of Mr. Salandria's writing, will reveal that although we often dealt with the same material, we dealt with it differently.

Especially is this true of his handling of the FBI report, with which I take *an issue* the sharpest possible disagreement. It is equally true of his deification of the FBI and its agent Frazier and his sheltering of J. Edgar Hoover in his handling of the FBI report. Mr. Salandria dedicated an article to Frazier and, so none could forget his glorification of the FBI, reminded his readers of this to him salient fact in the subsequent issue. I leave to Mr. Salandria's own belief and conscience his treatment of this material.

Although I knew of Mr. Salandria's article on the FBI report, I had completed my own Postscript on it before I saw it, even the single page photocopy Sylvia Meagher mailed me. I also knew the archive was open, and as my correspondence with Sylvia Meagher will reveal, if she elects to do this, I discouraged her and regretted others attracting attention to it. This was my belief. I believe it was important for all that possibly could be declassified. There is nothing in this FBI report that is not already in my book, as you will see if you read it. In fact, it says essentially what the FBI itself leaked, aside from the fact that the non-fatal bullet went nowhere, and this is clear from the testimony of Kellerman and the autopsy doctors, who I quoted.

I did not assault Mr. Salandria for why I regard as his immoral use of this report. But I did acknowledge in my book, for no other purpose, as you will see if you look at page 192, then to record that he used this report before I did. Actually, there was no ethical requirement for this. From the time Manchester had access to the files it was not possible for any other legitimate researcher to be denied access to them. I do not know when I first knew of his access, but without checking my inf files I know it was more than a year ago, for I recently saw a clipping on this dated that far back. Actually, I also introduced his writings to a London newspaper in competition with my own, for they were considering serialization of my book if it were published in England, and they have not yet rejected it. I ask you, what more could any fair person expect of me?

But I did do more and I did go further. In a letter to the vice president of Holt's protesting Mark Lane's false claim of "discovery" of this report (Mr. Salandria and Mr. Aronai made no reference to this claim and sent me no copies of letters of protest) I told him that I was not the first to publicly use the contents of the report. If Mr. Salandria feels any appreciation, his expression take an odd form *And I have done more I shall not detail for competitors, as recently as yesterday.*

I am sending a copy of this letter to Sylvia Meagher with the specific understanding that because of the unusual position she is in of friendship with the various principals to this dispute she not be troubled. While I would like her, ^{to read} if she so desires and you desire to ask her, I feel it is unreasonable and unfair to demand it of her and I do not. But if she feels under any confidence about the contents of any conversations we have had, about the contents of my copyrighted book when she read it or the circumstances under which she read it, of the editions she suggested and when she suggested them, or anything else about the book itself, I do release her from such restriction. Almost as much as I regret this entirely shameful matter I regret her innocent involvement because of her friendships and I suggest to you that if you desire to learn who is truthful and who is not you can readily do so without troubling her in any way. Just accept my challenge.

At the same time I issue a challenge to Mr. Salandria, and ^{do not} hide behind no lawyers evasions such as he so deftly exploits for his foul writing, an example of which is his "perhaps unintentional" in alleging plagiarism. I challenge him, to whom I am also sending a copy of this letter, to show me any of the writings of any others, himself pre-eminently included, that I cited in my book. Were I familiar with all the writings in the field, I would broaden this even further, but I do also challenge him to name a single comparable book completed at the time mine was.

At the same time I make clear to you that I will not yield to his blackmail, for how else, whether he is a friend of yours or not, can I describe his language in several parts of his letter: "It seems that the book has considerable merit... If he should undertake to do this (i.e. credit ~~him~~ Mr. Salandria and any others he has in mind for my own work) his book would deserve a warm reception... Only this 'one man's effort' flaw detracts from an otherwise important contribution to the literature."

It has just come to mind that I can show you more than I offered. I also have correspondence with a literary agent and some leads and summaries of my own, not Mr. Salandria's) analysis going back to the very time of the assassination, and other similar materials.

This is the last I shall have to say on the subject, unless you accept my challenge. I cannot afford the time or the emotion turmoil and its interference with my work such debased and characterless attacks on me require. I have borrowed the down payment to the printer. I worked entirely without either income or subsidy, going further in debt to do the work. I now haven't the slightest idea where the coming next payment to the printer, due June 10, will come from, and I freely acknowledge the added difficulties Mr. Salandria and Mr. Aronai have placed in my way. As I did not attack Mr. Salandria for his twisting of the clear meaning of the FBI report into a defense of the major culprit; as I did not use Mark Lane's false claims for the much-needed exploitation of my own book; as I have not even written Trevor-Roper about his own twisting of the facts to justify, along with Mark Lane and Mr. Salandria their obvious effort to make Earl Warren personally the goat in this horrible thing that has happened in our country; and as I have sought to protect even Mr. Aronai from the just consequences of his own irresponsibility, as I tell you that, unless compelled to another course, I am done with this. If there is anything else you would like of me, ask it. There are many constructive things Mr. Salandria has, despite his quite exaggerated concept of what he has done, left undone, and I'm working on them. I shall acknowledge no more such slanders or intrusions. Sincerely,