

4/22/69

Dear Sylvia,

With what has been published, as you recount it in your letter of 4/19, I have little argument, but with what is inherent in what you argue, that there is no difference on this subject and any other, or that there is real freedom of publication on this subject, or that every really important book has not had troubles getting published at all, there we part company. Frankly, I cannot reconcile your word with your fine intelligence, your personal experience and, in fact, your statements on the publishability of an article based on POST MORTEM III. That your book was ultimately published, or that a progressive-minded editor was helpful, is not relevant to the point, which was not could something ultimately be published. When was your book published? That is one of the great tragedies, that so fine a work had to await the publisher's acceptability to be established by inferior works. You recounted to me the difficulties you had. That there was no great trouble getting any index published is meaningless.

You know my experience with WHITEWASH. Would you care to read the letters from the editors, who did not make the decision and honestly told me this - and on what the decision was based? Dell, which finally came to me for the book, rejected it three times, twice without reading it at all.

The cases of Epstein and Popkin are not really applicable, because both had special auspices and special doctrines: Oswald assassin, which is hardly disagreement with the government. Nor is Epstein's assault on Warren personally while shielding those with greater operational responsibilities the kind of writing that has difficulty in the marketplace.

Your report on the poor quality of Lane's manuscript coincides with many that reached me, including from the editors who read and rejected it - who volunteered this, for I had no knowledge that his book had been in their hands. But you very well know that with a hot subject, that is no disqualification for a book. It is for this purpose that publishers have editors.

It was the easiest thing for publishers to tell me they didn't like the book, that it was poorly done, the standard things. But so very many didn't. Two the largest were quite specific. One spelled out his fear of the government. The other said he'd have been interested if the book could have been flawed on fact ("Our decision was not editorial and not easy to arrive at"). Or the number of executive editors who went for it and predicted best-seller status only to have to report the negative policy decision. I am astounded that you take the irrelevant as the fundamental, that you take a few minor exceptions as typical. But tell me, pray, what major publication had done any pioneering publishing of any new criticism, what had not already been brought to light? Or where TV did it (CBS, NBC, which refused even fairness-doctrine time)? AP? Or UPI? Here, where the vice-president ordered an anniversary piece from me in 1967 and liked it and put it on the wire, it was almost universally killed in the offices of the subscribers. Would you like to see my letters from European agents/Foreign correspondents without end? All in the same direction.

How can you invoke Sauvage's book when you know its nonpublishing history, know what R-H did with it, that World almost junked it after contracting, and that it took two years to get out here.

Before the WR things were not so bad. Lane's contract was for pre-WR material. We broke it, not Grove. This accounts for all the rest of your

listing with which I am familiar except Fox. These, as I understand it, Award got him to do the job. Need I tell you the subsequent history of and at Award, which is a minor house in any event.

Libels such as Epstein has in this week's Sunday Times that estimable journal finds publishable. What from the other side? The turned down, in that same Sunday magazine, what Harrison Salisbury recommended to them.

Frankly, when you write so you trouble me, for you certainly know better than to argue there is not great difficulty in getting any real, solid criticism published anywhere on this subject. Even the minor publications played pronounced favorites, were remarkably prejudiced.

I wish I could be optimistic where interest has been expressed, even where there has been lower-level approval. My experience precludes this.

Of course, I agree you should not undertake what you do not believe in. This does not bother me. This is the way it should be. That you believe so contrary to recent history is where I worry.

I wrote you and forgot to mail the enclosed.

Sincerely,

