

10/3/70

Dear Eric Blumenside,

After your (excuse the expression) book on Garrison came out, I wrote Meredith setting forth the extensive plagiarism from my work. The President seemed genuinely upset about this and another theft of my work in which Meredith was involved, was supposed to discuss with a friend of mine doing something about it, and took up with you that he accurately labelled serious charges. As you know, you made no response. As you and I both know, you couldn't. Your ineffectuality and your ignorance combined to gull you into the theft of even one of my mere errors. In that case, you were remarkably stupid, for I was able to warn you off. By accident I was with "some" Harris when he got a call on it. He said what I told him to say. And you heeded it, you'd have stolen one thing less.

Reports of your new project having just reached me, I have just written Meredith. Although I do not now have your address, I do write you so that preoccupation may not prevent it later. I think this letter is also in your interest.

A minor industry has grown up among speakers, literary whores and incompetent investigators. It is an old one, theft. In your case, you sought to disguise it with citations to some of it (in every case, without having sought permission). Of course, it is possible that is what you labelled as an "unauthorized" account, so much of which is unalloyed Garrison, your own ignorance may have kept you from knowing when he was using the material of others, which was by no means unknown. Unfortunately, Jim did almost no original and substantial work, having been enticed from it by those who commercialized him, of whom you are one. I understand that in your case it was not as profitable as you might have wanted. To others it yielded a considerable return. To Jim it was a disaster.

Literary theft is, to me, more despicable than other stealing because it is done by those who do not have to steal for their livelihood or to satisfy other needs. I am, of course, hurt when - as the victim. More, in the field in which for many years I have worked, I believe much is involved. Others and I have worked hard and at great cost in an effort to establish truth and so that the country can benefit therefrom. The sneaks, of whom you are one of the least skillfully disguised, also hurt this effort in many ways, the most obvious being in destroying credibility.

But Fensterwald is as open a man, in many ways, as Jim Garrison. He would like to help everyone, and his intention is to help. Like Jim, he has done little personal investigation, having drawn upon others. And like Jim, he is easily imposed upon. The first two times I mentioned it to him, Bud claimed not to know you were a book on the "ing/day case. Thursday he acknowledged that he knew you were doing one.

What you say not know is how much of what Bud has is my work. So, I am talking you - and in talking you, I am also warning you. Even his claim I got for him. My own concern for this being handled cleanly and acceptably is such that I declined a request from a major publisher that I do a short, fast,

unintentionally-written book not on the results of my work but on what I have done. This is neither my bog nor the means by which truth is established.

Although it should not be necessary to tell you this, I do remind you that a writer's rights in his material are vested in the common law as well as by copyright. He does not lose these rights when his material is used in any kind of official proceeding (witness the Archives and the Murray material). Prior to making all of my work available to Ned, I did inquire into this. You may have no way of knowing it (save that you certainly know it is not your own work), but a fair amount of the court record is my work. I have not given you and I will not give you the right to use any of my work.

Naturally, you can do your own work, even if in this field you seem never to have done it before. But, stay away from mine, in any form and from any secondary source. There is plenty to be done by everyone. You do not have to be a thief, even if that is the easier way.

There are also differences between the situation today and that prior to the Garrison disaster. I think it might help you to understand some of them. Although it was not the case when you began association with Ned, I am now under contract to a publisher, so it is not I alone who will have an interest when in doing something about plagiarism. Nor will my resources be as limited. Also, in earlier days there seemed to be a constructive purpose to be served by silence about the transgressions of an unfortunately large number of people. Not only is that no longer the case, but I have had all I want of the defense of the crooks, that I see some kind of person who imagines these things and other, similar libels and slanders.

Literary crooks and charos seem to engage in self-deception, to make what they do more tolerable to themselves. All, of course, have the ultimate motive. One seems to have spoken for most when he said, "As far as I am concerned, once a publisher has it, it becomes public domain." I would encourage you not to believe this.

Nor would you be wise to assume that I have written benefits for harassment. You know of your own theft, but you do not know that they owe me money under signed contracts, where they have never paid the contracted sums, and for the use of what was not contracted - as well as its misuse. I do not seek the hurt of any others, but I do and will seek the relief of my own hurt. If they are willing to make a fair settlement, as they originally indicated, that will satisfy me. If they are not, I do propose to seek relief in court, which will also be in public. If, as they indicated, they showed my letters to you, you should know that I am a father who knows his own son.

In all of this Ned is also in a vulnerable position. I would prevent hurt or the possibility of hurt to him, too. He is my lawyer in some matters, which complicates his life and activities in one direction, and he represents Ray's interests, which does the same to him in other ways. There he also has those who may well be looking for the chance to do something to him. And I, please believe me, will be vigilant in defending my own interests and those that mean something to me. It is not going to be as it has been, whatever is required, whatever is involved.

Sincerely,

Harold Velisberg