

Mr. Jim Fex, counsel
Harper & Row
10 E. 53 St.,
New York, N.Y. 10022

1/28/77

Dear Mr. Fex,

If you had sent me the book you wanted me to check because of the changes made, apparently, subsequent to my letter to Mr. Wyeth, it should have been here long before this. In my view you should have wanted to have heard from me by now from the way you spoke me during our last phone conversation.

This troubles me much because it addresses good faith on your part.

In checking the file to be certain of your address I noted something else that also troubles me and in its own way gets to good faith: I have no single response from you or anyone else at Harpers to any of my letters. The only letter I find is that of Mr. Wyeth in his promotions for your book. That is dated December 7. My response is dated three days later. It really was by return mail. But with all I have written, all I have sent, all I have offered, there is not one word from Harpers in writing and all that is verbal that I have from you is verbal because I did trust you and did not record any of our conversations.

Although I believe it is not necessary based on what you did ask for and I did send, when you asked me to go over the original McInley manuscript again and write you about it I did agree to do it after the lapse of a day. Once I agree you changed your mind and said you wanted me to go over the book, which you said you would send promptly. Then you said you would send two books, one for me to mark and return to you, one for me to keep.

But in fact you have again done nothing. I think an uninvolved person would look at this record and wonder if you were not for your own reasons playing lawyer's games, imposing on my trust to do it.

This really is adding insult to injury because it has taken much time I do not have. As I told you I am getting along in years, am not in the best of health and have undertaken a very large work I would like to complete. I have no staff, no assistant of any kind. When you were in such a great rush, belatedly under the circumstances as I now look back on these circumstances, to have copies of the Playboy manuscript as I annotated it, I stopped everything and had copies made and had them delivered to you. (Although when we spoke you told me that the check in payment of my cash costs was then being processed it has not reached me.) I had no reason not to trust you or any representative of your house. But it has been costly to me in ways you have no way of knowing. One is that with all the snow we have I am now unable to leave my home. With the time it is now apparent I have wasted on Harpers I could have had an indicated electrical checkup on my car, as one example. Being immobile leads to problems for me if not to you, for me serious problems. I am saying that it has been a sacrifice to trust Harpers and that I did not expect it would be. I did try in every way I could think of to be helpful to Harpers and to you.

I really can't think of how I could have been more open, more willing or have offered any more than I did, beginning last year. In going over the file to be sure of the address I note what I think now is not irrelevant, that you do business at the next town west of here, closer in time that going to many parts of Manhattan from your office, about a half hour. I offered unrestricted access to any representative you might send. While I believe Harper interest should have been sufficient to send someone from New York, given the seriousness of the matter, you had people close to here and did not use them. When I add this to the making of changes after the bound proofs to which I reacted without any of the changes in what is damaging to me I can see the kind of motive I would not have expected.

While I have no way of knowing when I reflect on this one of the obvious possibilities is that you were deliberately stalling me past pub date. In time we will know that day as you undoubtedly do now.

I regret very much that you have seen fit to add the insult to injury by wasting all this time for me.

If and when I receive the long-variant books I will, when I can, go over them as you asked. I will also have others do likewise. However, you have seen to it that there is no rush now.

I am sorely disappointed over this kind of treatment from a house like Harper & Row.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg