Dear Dave (and), 1/3/77

Your 12/29 and 12/30 here today. We have not been closer that 25° to your 20- except in wind-chill, when we were below that. I'm staying in except for short walks and going for the papers and mail, etc., and getting my exercise with the exercycle. Having nok kids to worry about we also keep the temperature in the house what most would consider low and avoid consequences of dryness. So to date the only real problem from the unseasonal cold is that I could not dig up a cedar I wanted to transplant for anx living Xmas tree and can't dig a hole in which to plant the one I bought - a blue spruce that hasn't blued yet.

In my opinion your perceptien of Lane and his role or career is accurate, really enormously understated. Yet the danger of extrapolation is great, as is the inherent unfairness of a blast by the Skolnickeri. It is an extraordinarily difficult thing to reach a proper balance there is so much insanity and self-service, the two with this pair inextricable. Much as I might relish the disconcerting effect of one disinformationist on another I have difficulty believing the Skolnickeri are either fair or in contact with reality.

In this, if I amy pretend the trappings of scholarship which I do not have, I am suggesting that the task you have undertaken may be more difficult and complicated than you may yet see. As you get into it you will. One problem when so many deserve so much criticism is not letting anger or emption carry us away.

I have files on just about all these people having had such scholarship as you now projecy in mind. On some they are scant. Like Dusty Rhoads, who gathered many signatures.

At some future time I will address this other than you do, so you are welcome to all I have if you get a contract for the book. I'll profit from some very good advice from Jim, not to let me anger , disgust and contempt show and treat him like The Foundling Father.

If you do get a contract, feel completely free to use whateveryou may want of the rough draft I did that you converted into scholarship. I think if it could be condensed the New York Review might go for it.

On Lane and footnotes: recommend you get in touch with Wesley Liebeler, who had a crew of students checking them out. It is not only that wha they said is what you say, they may have done extensive work and kept records. I can give you footnotes to non-existing sources not corrected in the reprpint when he promised it. And the tape making the promise, on a TV show.

Before this is over, if you are olde enough or have seen the silents, you may want to go for The Mark of Zoro. A concept. I may want to use the title. Old Doug Fairbanks, kiddo.

I am uneasy about the title When Critics Fail. I think it will not mean enough to most people. Nothing wrong with the idea but I fear the title does not convey it.

Also for your understanding of Lane, I agree he is evil. I am not certain that is the rock base. I think this is that he is sick, emotionally sick. Abbe, depraved, etc. But really sick, especially in the ego.

Twice I have considered books similar to your project. When he was about to abort a N.O. trial I drafted (bad title) A Citizen's Rescent." On Garrison I came to conceive Lemming: The Mardi Gras Solutions to Political Assassinations. So I think the idea is a good one. Not now for me because other matters are more important to me.

Good luck to you with it and feel free to use all I have.

With each addition to the rapidly growing stack of papers I become more convinced that for the law school this King file along will be of extraordinary importance. When the deliberate dishonesties of the official pleadings is added the impirtahce becomes much greater. And comprehensible. Best to you all and thanks,

university of wisconsin / stevens point • stevens point, wisconsin 54481

December 30, 1976

Harold Weisberg
R.R. 12
Frederick My 21701

Dear Harold:

20 degrees below zero and there is room left at the bottom of the glass!

Presently I am working on a new course which I must teach next semester and it is taking a bit of work to line out the issues for freshmen who nowadays can't read, can't write and don't really care. At the same time I am working on a book on Marx and Capitalism.

Last week I sent to ~~the~~ a publisher a proposal for a book on the critics and supporters of the Warren and other investigations into the Kennedy assassination. When Critics Fail is the working title. What will happen I don't know.

Your letter about Lane made me mull over the ways I could answer your request for a comment on him. I do not know if what I came up with is what you had in mind, but I send several copies with the enclosed letter that you are free to do whatever you wish to do with. If you would like to toss in a waste basket, fine!

Sherman Skolnik's boys in Chicago attacked Lane when he spoke there recently.They filled up the first rows and held their noses. They then got up when he appeared and started handing out leflets (I am trying to get xx copies) and statements to the audience attacking Lane and his facts and his influence, etc. Then--and you have got to give the devil his due--old Sherm had a couple of girls start taking photographs of Lane while he spoke. They xx xx flashed the hell out of him. Every time he emphasized a point or turned his cheek to the autdieance--pop! Finally he had to ask for them to stop and said he would provide a time space for picture taking. When he announced that they could take pictures no one would raise a camera. He was xxxxxxx flustered. If this xxxxxxx catches on it would be interesting, wouldn't it?

I must go to make themail

Adios

Dave

Department of History • (715) 346-2334

university of wisconsin / stevens point • stevens point, wisconsin 54481

December 29, 1976

Harold Weisberg
R.R. 12
Frederick My. 21701

Dear Harold:

At present I am attempting to pull together my thinking on the question of critics of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy toward the end of writing a critical volume on their impact upon the public and Congress. While my net will be tossed to pull in all the major figures I especially wish to concentrate on the psuedo-critics, as I have called them, and this requires an extended treatment of Mark Lane whose negative influence must be laid out for the public to see. My considered judgment is that he is primarily responsible for the failure of Congress and intellectuals to investigate the assassination and its investigation and has repelled men and women of good sense and ability from pursuing it. In a most meaningful way he has dissembled and tainted a major American tragedy, and still is able to continue his most heinous activity for publishers apparently are oblivious, tainted themselves, or too naive to understand the issue involved with Mark Lane.

My first indication of the deception involved with Lane's work arose when I read Rush to Judgment. My training in school had been under the critical wing of American history at Urbana, Illinois, and had required me to spend an awful lot of time with the footnote charade of many contemporary scholars. Lane's footnotes and footnoting style fit the classic pattern of psuedo-scholars, really a pavonine display, a lot of feathers and ruffles but precious little meat. Where, I asked myself, was the citation to other works, to scholars like yourself, to newspaper accounts which require a tremendous amount of activity to utilize, to legal works, to the intricate details of the Warren Commission documents that demand not reference to a page but reference to words and phrases and conflicting words and pages, and to interviews with attorneys and witnesses hostile to his presentation that they might be rebutted as he developed his argument? They did not exist, or but rarely.

Second, where was his citations to your work? It is impossible to undertake any major work of history or current issues without standing on the shoulders of many who are also working. From my knowledge of your WHITEWASH I knew he was downright unfair to your work and the great effort you expended in clearing the cobwebs and lies and stupidities from the path of others who were working, not to mention the many, to me, uses of your material in developing chapters and subjects. Thus I saw at that early stage a basic dishonesty that I later

learned by dint of hard knocks and much effort was naive on my own part. He is much more than dishonest, for that implies a certain orientation to the truth that one might cheat and defraud in terms of it. I truly believe he lacks that saving criterion of the rascal or great rogue. He is fundamentally evil, if by evil one means use of fact, proper treatment of subject matter, and so forth, is totally absent.

All this seems, perhaps, hard and lightly tossed off by someone who is in an atmosphere of the Ivory Tower, but it is considered and easily proved.

Third, the film Rush to Judgment, not the book by the same name, also tripped me up for some time. Never in my wildest dreams could I imagine the living witnesses to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy could be manipulated by that Lane. The factual fraud involved is apparent from a casual viewing by a critical mind I am sure, for I asked many persons who did not know the details of several issues to comment on several points within the film. There are many specific issues here that I could raise with you to illustrate my observations, but I wish to keep my letter on a general plane that the larger issue involved here might not escape me. Just one example must suffice. He interviewed at great length Nancy Perrin Rich, the "bartender" at Jack Ruby's club in Dallas and utilized the information to build his case for conspiracy(between the unfortunate Ruby and the framed Oswald.) But I knew from the testimony in the Warren Commission volumes and from newspaper accounts as well as from the logic of the woman's testimony on film that she was at variance with other informatinn she had given and that she had had a history of mental breakdowns or confusion. Lane used her to fit his theory and disregarded everything else.

Since my initial or preliminary contacts with the works of Mark Lane I have grown much more critical and believe that my chapter on his deceits and frauds and perversions and really betrayal of the people will have an impact on the public. Hopefully I can pull in some material on the publishing industry, especially the names and contributions of their attorneys and officers who promoted and profited from Lane. We must not forget one--as they sow so also will they reap. All of this to be, of course, objective and reasonable in presentation.

Recently I have heard Lane has been booed and verbally attacked in lectures in Chicago as well as pamphleted in other college appearances by some who are smelling a big fat rat. This news made my Christmas.

In another letter I will discuss some additional points about Lane.

Regards,

Dave

David R. Wrone