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November 9, 1976

President  
Prentiss-Hall  
Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey 07632

Dear Sir:

It has been reported to me that you have contracted with Mark Lane and Dick Gregory for a book on the King assassination, with a large advance.

Mr. Gregory has been coast-to-coast on some irrelevancies that I discarded five or more years ago, that have been the subject of more than one investigation, and I have the results of one and expect the results of the other. Here you are lucky. You will do no more than fall flat on your faces.

Not that this as well as what follows is Mr. Gregory's own work. I have copies from the one who conducted that investigation and, in addition to the results of the non-federal investigation, some relevant federal records.

Mr. Lane is an accomplished thief in the field he has commercialized successfully and misused as a vehicle of self-promotion. However, it is not merely that he is no more than a ripoff artist. As an investigator he could not find public hair in an over-worked and undercleaned bordello at rush hour.

He has attracted some attention to himself with what he was not satisfied merely to steal. He had to contort it to pacify his sick ego.

This work is mine and that of a friend to whom I gave some of my work product for him to carry forward. Both are protected, including by copyright.

Because Mr. Lane needs attention as you and I need air, he has provided me with a record that is more than merely adequate.

Feel free to give him a copy of this letter. The last time I had to address him this way, it came back to me that he had threatened to sue me. My response was to send him a certified letter adding charges of this nature. He has not sued. Pray that he does! That could do what John Connally did not when he contented himself with calling Mr. Lane no more than a scavenger.

I think your counsel will tell you that plagiarism, in which Mr. Lane has a long record, is not the only basis for a suit.

New Times has already published a retraction over some of Mr. Lane's thievery in the form of a letter from the national editor of Newsday. The friend who carried forward some of my work when I was unable to because of the results of acute thrombophlebitis is Les Payne, Newsday's minority affairs reporter. Mr. Payne is currently in South Africa. However, before he left he informed me how Mr. Lane had attempted to duplicate Mr. Payne's copyrighted work and mine and my work product. In part, this was by saying he represented Mr. Payne. Mr. Lane and an associate then, on many occasions, falsely represented Mr. Payne's work and mine as Mr. Lane's own and original work.

Mr. Lane is a lawyer. He got in to see James Earl Ray after the warden had left the jail for the day. The warden since has been apologetic about this. Your counsel can explain this to you. I am confident he will not tell you it is proper with a criminal case not having reached its final adjudication, particularly not when Mr. Lane knows Mr. Ray's lawyer and did not ask his permission.

I recognize that these charges can surprise you. However, in both our interests, I feel I must put you on notice, as with this letter I do. I recognize also that you may find this outside your usual experiences. I am prepared to provide you with ample proofs.

Mr. Lane has been lulled by nobody ever having done to him what he deserves. I have a lawyer now and my lawyer has an interest: He is James Earl Ray's only defense counsel. I am the only one who has ever been Mr. Ray's investigator. This lawyer also represents me in Freedom of Information Act matters that also are being parasitized, to his knowledge as well as mine.

Mr. Lane is drawing upon the incompetent thievery of fellow crooks. They have made efforts with both Mr. Payne and me, hoping for our assent to being robbed. You should understand that I am not giving permission for the use of any of my work. I cannot speak for Mr. Payne, but I think you would be wise to assume he also will not. He will know of this on his return from Africa, when he will find a carbon awaiting him.

I am well aware of Mr. Lane's customary responses. Believe them at your risk.

You should also know that the damage to me is compounded by the fact that I have a new book on the King assassination two-thirds written and that Mr. Lane has already stolen some of its content. So you will have no illusions about the Freedom of Information Act part, this is my work, going back to March of 1969, as recently established in federal court. My first suit on this subject, in the same jurisdiction, is C.A. 718-70. My first book on the King assassination is FRAME-UP. It is the one book not in accord with the official account of the crime.

I do not assume evil intent on your part. Rather do I assume that you have been imposed upon.

I know Mr. Lane and Mr. Gregory better than you.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg