

Ms. Joan Ellen
P O Box 359
Pennington, NJ 08554

3/11/98

Dear Joan,

Not only do I remember you but you'd come to mind several times recently and if I were not so frail and tire so easily while I continue to work, to make what record I can for history, I'd have written you again.

As I remember it, you had a student with you.

The reason I wrote promptly is not because I'd like very much ^{as I do} to read your Hammett/Hellman ^{book} (I was their fan, individually and collectively) and because I depend on what I can borrow to read, standing still now being more of a no-no than when you were here. I've also become a very slow reader and spend more time reading for work without reading as much. *What I'm doing may interest you.*

If you are going to write about Garrison you should speak to me and at greater length than a lunch. I also urge you to tape it because there is much and while ~~you~~ you won't be interested in all the detail for what you write I think you will for your understanding. He was a strange mixture of the best and the most reprehensible, as I was long unwilling to believe and did not and as I was finally forced to confront when ~~the~~ staff asked for help to block what would have been more of a fiasco than the Shaw case, for which he had no evidence at all. *(You can speak to them.)*

To give you an idea, he was going to charge two actual assassins he said were on the Grassy Knoll. One, to his ^(his knowledge had killed himself the previous year in New Orleans) knowledge had killed himself the previous year in New Orleans. The other ^{was} utterly basely. ^(he did or did not) He made up a story to cover the corpse of an assassin and I had to, when asked, do the job to make it impossible for him to do what he'd planned. You can't recognize this in the one trail he never took, that of the assassins. But I have a carbon of the report I gave Sciambra, one of the two who asked my help when they could not talk Jim out of that insanity, and a small amount of the documentation referred to. I was writing on the dining-room table of the friend I was staying with and using his broken, east-German portable to type on. So, with no xerox there, I have fewer of the documents than I'd like. But I have a carbon copy and you are welcome to go over it. To make a copy here and because I keep convoluted hours, retiring early, if as I urge you, to stay over, ~~you~~ you can ask me about it the next day. I've not read it since 1968.

You value your reputation so use not a word of his without ample confirmation. Otherwise you'll damage your reputation. And be aware that if you say a word about him that does not glorify him the nuts will try to clobber you. But that can help sell books, ... If you decide to do what I urge on you, best is the Red Horse Inn, ^{#288 3rd St} 10 minutes or less away. For the most part you can copy and use what I have. You can copy all. I'll have to go over it for attribution on some or names. Best,

Harold

Joan Mellen

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March 10, 1998

Mr. Harold Weisberg
7623 Old Receiver Road
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Dear Mr. Weisberg:

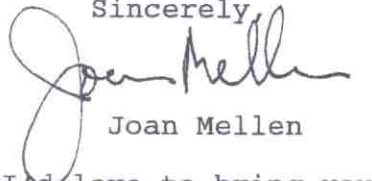
It has been twenty years since we met so I doubt whether you remember me. I came to visit you and your wife in connection with a book I was writing about the murder of David Bruce's daughter. Since then I have become a biographer, while still teaching at Temple University. In all I have published twelve books.

Your Whitewash books had an enormous influence on me. Indeed the subject of the Kennedy assassination remained buried deep, but writing my own memoir, which I have just completed, somehow made me return to the person I was in the sixties and seventies. I am now just embarked on a biography of Jim Garrison, and hope very much that I might spend a little time with you once more. I will of course bring with me your Oswald in New Orleans.

It would be my very greatest pleasure to invite you and your wife to lunch on a date convenient for you (a Friday, Saturday or Sunday would be best since I'm teaching the equivalent of five courses this semester). Jim Lesar spoke of you to me last night as well. I hope this will be possible.

With admiration, and the hope that we will be meeting again very soon,

Sincerely,



Joan Mellen

If you would be interested, I'd love to bring you a copy of my own last book, a dual biography of Lillian Hellman and Dashiell Hammett.