

Rt. 12, Frederick, Md. 21701
8/15/75

Dear David,

The books and your letter of the 11th both came yesterday. Thanks for both.

Let me explain the situation on Qawald in New Orleans so we can figure out if the tracing you've done can be of some help.

The publication deal was an unusual one in which, in lieu of an advance, I was given a 50% interest in the net. The publisher distributed through Pocket Books, which refused to handle the subject. Neither of us knew this until close to pub date. I learned later, of course, when there was no real alternative for either of us. The practical effect was almost to keep the book off sale because what gets onto the racks is controlled by truck drivers part of whose income is commissions. There was no net. The book did poorly. For all practical purposes, Pocket killed it.

So, we had to improvise. One of these efforts involved a luftmensch I did not then know to be a dubious character, one John Christian. His family then was in Carmel and I later learned he was living with a woman in S.F., on Pacific Avenue. The last I heard of John he was somewhere in the L.A. area.

I then had a good friend in Oakland, Hal Verb, from whom I've not heard in some years. He was then at 753 1/2 Warfield Ave. Phone 839-4671. He made no living for a long time and then got a job and developed a sideline which kept him very busy as he struggled to get back onto his feet. Hal may remember this Pacific Avenue address. That is where the books last were. Christian got 5,000 of them without paying for them. He refused to return them without prepayment of shipping costs. I finally got a guarantee on this from the publisher, who was very kind about it, and then John simply would do nothing.

I know they placed some books with L & S, which strangely refused to put them on sale on the theory they'd sell better when Garrison finally got into court! However, I do not know how American News got them. I imagine from the publisher in NYC. If they did these are not my copies. If they came from the Christian supply they are. What tends to make me believe they can be from the Christian supply is their condition. Also, it is not the practise to warehouse paperbacks. American News would have sold every copy by merely having a few places of sale. Unless a few boxes were misplaced I'm inclined to think these were not from their original purchase. Not when they closed out their West Coast operations a year ago. Or, there is also reason to believe that these can be from the supply that is my property if it still exists.

It is beyond my capacity to follow this, much as I'd like to. I get up early each morning and work until late at night and can't keep up. If you can get Hal Verb to be responsive we might learn that address on Pacific and see if the books are still there. Maybe I had the address. If Christian is back in the Bay area, Hal might be able to learn it and I might then be able to do something. Christian did place some books in a few store but he never paid for any.

If there is anything further you can do on this I'd appreciate it.

We are using up the wrong-sized envelopes for WW IV when we have orders for two books. I generally go around the perimeter with 1" masking tape and then the ends with inexpensive Scotch tape. I also encircle both ways with at least two runs of this Scotch tape. The primitive manner in which I have to work limits my packaging facilities and time. I do the packaging in the living room while looking at TV news. So, I have to use tape in hand dispensers except for the masking tape. This makes the large roll of 3/4" tape impractical because it requires a large dispenser. I'd prefer the reinforced tape but it is too costly.

Many thanks,

THIS LETTER
POSTED AUG. 11th.

David Pearlmuter/Design
1440 Sacramento Street • Suite Seven
San Francisco • California • 94109

8 AUG. 1975

Dear Harold, Today I received from you WW I&II. Thank you for sending them in good faith in lieu of O in NO. Under separate cover you will receive two CANYON editions of OSWALD IN NEW ORLEANS (to be in new condition at time of mailing). Hope that they get to you OK.

By the way...The special white envelopes that you used to send WW I&II did not hold up too well. Both the left and right sides of the envelope were crudely torn open. These tears were not re-sealed and appropriately so indicated by an official ink stamp. Probably some nosy person in the post office had itchy fingers. If you plan to continue to utilize these envelopes, I would like to suggest that you use/apply to the edges of the envelope: SCOTCH brand transparent tape No. 600, 3/4 inch x 2592 inches (72 yds.), This will aid in preventing accidental or intentional tearing open while in transit through the US Postal network.

Don't worry. The two books did arrive in well enough condition. I'm still pleased. This particular tape roll cost \$1.96 here in San Francisco. Probably cheaper in Maryland. Far cheaper by the dozen.

Now let's get down to brass tacks. First, I sympathize with you because you were so royally shafted over the 5,000 books sent to San Francisco. What a rotten deal. I sure wish that I could have been here in SF at the time you were desperately attempting to be paid or having your books returned. I would have been and I am still willing to get them on the truck myself. At that time I was galavanting around Israel.

You wanted to know where and how I got the books. My wife accidentally ran across them while browsing through through an outlet store that does not usually sell books:

PAUL'S 366 Post Street
San Francisco, Calif. 94108

(They are not listed in the most recently published SF telephone directory).

Telephone: (415) 433-2929

This outlet store is located in Union Square, two doors down from the QANTAS Airlines building.

Q: How many editions of O in NO were available for sale at PAUL'S?

A: Fourteen (14) editions in brand new condition. I have all fourteen copies. After all these years, what would an outlet store be doing with that many UN-OPENED, pristine copies? After a bit of telephone detective work, the store proprietor admitted that he purchased them from: AMERICAN NEWS. It was a CASH sale. The man from AMERICAN NEWS CO. brought them to PAUL'S unsolicited to sell...(unload). Probably other titles were also included in the sale. This was undetermined, because I did not ask.

Trying to find out just exactly what and where AMERICAN NEWS CO. is was like plowing the ocean with a fork. They have newsstands in bus depots, hotels, etc., all over the place. The man at PAUL'S either would not or could not provide either a specific address or phone number here in the bay area. Odd.

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I decided to telephone L-S DISTRIBUTORS: 1161 Post Street
Fugured they would have the info req'd. SF 94109 (415) 771-0330
Proprietor: *Mr. SWIFT at L-S Distributors.
Another individual other than Mr. SWIFT attempted to assist.
He stated that the general offices (parent company) is located in
New York City. Also the UNION NEWS CO. is apparently owned by the
AMERICAN NEWS CO., located at the same address and telephone number.

of
Am. News
Co.

AMERICAN NEWS CO.
131 Varik
N.Y., N.Y. (212) 255-5100

Was I able to determine a local phone number for Amer. News? NO.
Phantoms in the night. Slippery.

These books supposedly may have originated from the newsstand at
the downtown AC Transit bus depot at 1st & Mission Street. Not
crystal clear.

It seems that when the B.A.R.T (Bay Area Rapid Transit) system came
into effect, AMERICAN NEWS had to cut back in stock and operations.
A number of operations have already been closed down.

It seems clear that the final responsibility lies with the continuing
parent company in New York City, dealing in CONTRABAND books.

Did you by chance send a quantity of your books to L-S Distributors?
They are a major paperback book, ~~an~~ magazine and newspaper distributor
here in San Francisco. They have damned near everything.

Did you deal directly with private bookstores or solely with local
distributors? Who?

There are now a number of local consumer action groups not run by
city or state government. They help people who get taken to the
cleaners as it were. Sort of mini Ralph Nader-type organizations.

Did you attempt the services of an attorney or perhaps a contingency
basis? A small fee for drafting off a few harrassing letters
to these culprits? Did these people who received your books for
re-sale, openly refuse to return or pay you for these books?
Or did they just quietly ignore your requests?...Disposing your
invoices into the circular file (trash can)? It's hard to imagine
apparently responsible companies acting in such a manner.

I hope that the information that I have provided for you will be
of some help.

Once again.... two CANYON editions of OSWALD IN NEW ORLEANS are being
mailed to you under separate cover.

*MR. SWIFT DIED IN
AUTO CRASH LAST WEEK.
JUST FOUND OUT.
READ OBIT IN F.F. COPOLAS
"CITY OF SAN FRANCISCO"
MAGAZINE.

Sincerely,

David Pearlmutter

David Pearlmutter

(The following day)

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PS: Here's an update. Today I followed up another lead. I learned that AMERICAN NEWS pulled out of the west coast completely, both northern and southern California. Last year sometime. Sold out their operations.

Their former District Manager bought one of their newstand businesses. His name is Mr. Muggy. He's either located inside or right near the HOLIDAY INN on Fisherman's Warf. I was told from a contact that used to work for American News Co. ~~that was~~ in the 1st & Mission bus depot, that Mr. Muggy would be able to answer almost any question about the AMERICAN NEWS CO. operation in the SF area. That is unless I cared to contact their New York office. Muggy is the San Francisco connection.

What else can I tell you? It's all laid out for you.

I telephoned the Holiday Inn to check. (415) 771-9000
Yes, Mr. Muggy runs the GIFT SHOP AND NEWSSTAND in the Holiday Inn. The switchboard said that the gift shop can be reached by simply asking for it through the main phone number. (Listed above).

I knew that there was something that I forgot to do.

Please let me know how you do, one way or the other.

D.P.