Dear Bob,

4/18/75

Had my wife not called my attention to the handwritten postscript on the back of your letter of the 14th I'd just have filed it with more regrets for a good reporter who got into a field for which he is not qualified and thereafter, in a futile effort to recapture his self respect, beshits himself. She opened the letter and thus saw this note which I had not as I was about to file it. If you have no carbon I'll repeat it for you:

"And you'd better be careful what you write or say about me, my professional ethics, etc. I am almost as litigeous as you are!"

When you have my record, Bob, then boast. As for your threats, you are childish. Do you think I dare the Department of Justice to charge me with perjury to cow at your farting in red ink?

You have done three articles on assassination "buffs" and others of which I know. They display an incompetence of judgement and an unawareness of fact and reality that a self-respecting writer would be ashamed of if he were writing really serious work. There was the piece in the LATimes Sunday mag, that abprtion on Fensterwald's Georgetown and now this.This is a thoroughly disreputable piece.

What there is between you and the editors of Rolling Stone is for you and your conscience, perhaps self-respect, to confront. You did not have to agree to their editing. It is an ancient and honored tradition not only of the public service that a man separates himself from what his conscience cannot accept.

Although the question is not really what your piece as printed under your name does not say about me, I have had experience with editing of both writing and quotes and Jerry Policoff had told me that you had told him you were unhappy about your treatment and that of your writing. So I was, until I saw your threat, prepared to file and forget still another writer to whom a buck meant more than a good name or honest writing.

Your letter is less than forthright and does not face the realities of which you knew and in fact agreed to be part.

When I first heard that Rolling Stone had commissioned you to do a piece on the "critics," because this subject means much to me as does whatever resolution is possible and because I remembered your wretched record on the subject of "crifics" I wrote a cuation to Rolling Stone. Naturally, they did not like it. They know all there is to know. About everything, which makes them like you. To be able to understand who does and has done work and who is a publicity seeker or a bullshit artist requires much more time than any magazine piece can justify. For Rolling Stone editors as for others this is just another subject for whoring around (whether the idea originated with you or with them), just another occasion for ripping off the minds of the young.

When I got the transcript and did the book I offered distribution to Straight Arrow and ancillary rights to the magazine. Negative. When you were here I asked you to ask them again about the ancillary rights. All of this was well before you were at the Archives by your own account. So they decline my offer and pay you for it and you complain to me and threaten me with suits? Man do you scare me! I have the letter in which I expressed my understanding of your letter on this. And phone Jon Newhall at Zodiac News. He spoke to them for me as I recall before there was a book.

Now let us get to that box,"Gerald Ford's Little White Lie." Of course you do not crib the work of others. Have you not told me so? Then how come in this box you had nothing to say that I did not in all that can be said of that kind of perjury and on such an occasion? Or how you happened to select precisely those words I used from the Judiciary record. Not one more,not one less. And there is more. Give me an explanation reasonable men can accept for believing you are not a crook whose money comes from passing off the work of others as his work.

"ive me another lecture with another threat about your "professional ethics."

You say of this transcript in a footnote in the same column no more than that I reprint it and at the end of this box no more than that "The National Archives declassified" it. With what you know and knew long before you wrote this piece are you going to tell me this is honest writing?

What you have done in this disgraceful abandonment of all decency and all of the respected traditions of writing is pretend a) that out of the kindnes of its overflowing heart the government just let this all out and b) I just managed to get hold of it and saw a chance to make a fast buck and reprinted it.

You and Rolling Stone both knew better.

You both knew not only that I had a long and difficult struggle for six or eight years but that I risked prosecution by those I was suing to get it.

When you have this kind of balls I'll see more of a man in you than the shape.

You refer to your visit here. You made certain representations. I took you at your word. You either had no intention of writing the kind of piece you represented to me or for a buck and without real principle you wrote a different kind of piece. Either way your "professional ethics" were a deception of me. Why the hell when I work 18-20 hours a day should I sit up until 1 a.m. batting my gums with you?

I could not have been more open or forthright. I dare you to say otherwise. The reason I asked you to tape is because of the piece you described. What other relevance is there to what you wanted to go into? If I had not trusted you I'd either not have seen you or taped myself or not let you tape. But I did trust you, which is other than the inference of the opening of your letter, which is no more than an accurate reflection of the kinds of people with whom you associate.

The purpose of my asking for these tapes is other than you represent,"what they'd show" and "a long and rambling conversation." I told you why and the reason had to do with a special purpose for a record, as you well know.

As I folded this literary monument to man's dishonesty up for filing I also noted the head on your ripping off of my work,"II. The Recently Discovered Transcript of an Executive Session." Explain this in terms of this alleged high value you place on your "professional ethics."

Recently discovered indeed! You even chisseled two extra copies from Jim Lesar.

And the book was printed long before you were at the Archives.

Bill me in, again in terms of this exalted ethics, on how you managed to make such good use of my back cover.

You are so incompetent a crook that when you ripped off the New York Times without credit (p.27, col. 4) you were limited to what Franklin, who was also put on, wrote. You could not rip off the air on which I straightened that one out. (I have the documents and the Times' source and Howard Willens were on the same show.)

Or is that one misused (including by you the thief) document from a larger file also something "Recently Discovered?"

Of course none of this has to do with what you call "Serious Critics." Like the man who came to Nixon's defense on that 18 1/2 minute erasure and his associates. Or the man who hasn't even read the basic literature. Or a plug for a device of the police state. Or the man who looks at autopsy film and finds proof the Cubans did it. Sylvia Meagher, who did a magnificent work, is not worthy of your mention. And I who have printed more than all other "serious" critics combined and filed more FOI suits than any other writer and all others on this subject alone (including the only [illegible] content of your piece not the overflow of a toilet) am by this record alone not a

"serious" critic.

You did ask about malice. And I did describe your earlier writing as very bad and predicted, as you have proven, that this also would be.

One could find malice in your fucking up in the Sirhan case (fact) and your resentment over others not fucking up (opinion).

You put this off on the editors of Rolling Stone and suggest I might sue them. When you know how broke I am you know this is no more than a silly self-service. But if you have any notion of a basis in fact, by all means make it.

If is even more foolish when you boast about all the good your way of handling my work and your/their way of mentioning the book did. To date I have had two letters referring to it that included orders. One of these also referred to a radio talk show that writer heard. I can attribute one order to your masterpiece and their good will. The other letters were by a few people who were repelled by what you did.

I am not going into all about which there can be legitimate complaint in that issue of Rolling Stone. Nor am I being as complete as I can be about what bore your name or initials.

You decided to threaten me.

Federal District Court for the jurisdiction in which I live is in Baltimore.

Your words are,"And if you'd better be careful what you write or say about me, my professional ethics, etc. I am almost as litigious as you are!"

If I have fallen short of your needs, please let me know. If I take some time I'm sure I can do better. I'm willing to try.

Contemptuously,

Harold Weisberg