2/7/73

Dear Walter,

Thanks for your note of the fifth and the enclosures.

Marc may not so understand, but I'm sure you know that whether Bantam publishes this crap or not is immaterial to me. If my analysis of what is possible is correct - and I have no doubt Marc's appraisal of the commercial possibilities is - the book will be published in the United States anyway.

Because Marc has often been a courageous publisher, I would take the liberty of urging a few precautionary measures upon him. I have no way of knowing what lies behind this endeavor. All I can say is that I see things as possible. One is hurting him and Bantam. One of the purposes thus served, and only one, is undermining confidence in your more courageous non-fiction.

Much if not all of what I have in mind would appear to be the normal interests of a publisher intent upon a real promo with a coming book. If he is going to sign the contract anyway, that I'd recommend waiting until after he signs it and has his signed copy from the Frenchmen.

The information he should seek, and in writing, has to do with the life of the alleged author and a chronology on the book and the names of all of those in any way connected with it, like his consulted OAS superior. More information about the bull (read bullshit) farm, where it is, its capacity, the breed, what he does with the girl cattle (until they have calved twice, they are known as heifers, city slicker), how big a spread he has, how many employees, where he got his initial stock - the kinds of things that would seem likely to p.r. people about a farm and a farmer. They may tell me other things, and if they do, I'll tell you. Remember, I was a farmer.

Romero says he knew Paris well, including the subways. (Glad he doesn't call himself Jean Valjean!) Thus he should know something about the OAS establishment there. This could be real dramatic copy and would lend itself to superspook p.r. work, so see what you can get about his Paris career and contacts. My real purpose here is to be able to tell Marc, assuming they give anything, whether it seems to connect with another fake book I've mentioned to you. My hunch is that if you are told anything, it will be that it is still too dangerous for his former associates. That, too, would be the end product of the bull.

If this were a legit story, you'd never see a picture of Romero. I'd like to see a good glossy of him, beard and all. And his ghost(s?). The coarse-screen printed copies I have are unclear. (One thing you don't want to do is ask an expert if a man can turn white overnight, because then you'll be in the position of knowing that you are publishing a fake.)

If there is a real "Mike" (I realize I'm talking about things you do not know, but anyone who read the ms will), it would be child's play to identify him from the "blue book" as it used to be called, at least. It is blue-jacketed list of diplomatic assignments. In what I've seen there is no explanation for the relationship between Romero and Mike. The CIA is like the rest of the world, all kinds. There was a bitter-end, megalomaniacal ultra faction, probably, for the most part, recruited in the Hillenkoeter days, and those who, especially by comparison, were "liberal". (Tom Braden was in charge of the National Student Association subversion.) Only an ultra would a Romero trust. But there is a logic problem: what was Romero doing in contact with U.S. intelligence and how did he square this with his OAS colleagues? Maybe the ms. explains this and other questions, but the advance publicity doesn't. You see, long before this, U.S. intelligence double-crossed the colons, fingering for the Bay of Pigs boys an OAS stache of munitions in Louisiana.

There was a heist. It was near Houma, Louisiana. So, why should any OAS trust any US spooks? In short, anything and everything about Mike and the relationship. I've run out of time. But he looking for clues showing involvement of SDECE, the [illegible]