2/7/73 later

Dear Walter,

Sorry this is a broken-up day because the potential of harm to your people in the Romero book troubles me. I am not saying to expect it, only that it is possible. Without seeing the entire ms guessing what all this potential is would be irresponsible.

But let me take the Mike part a bit further. I've said that if I really wanted to I could probably figure out who he is if he was real from the Blue Book. There is also more, that such a man would be known to his Embassy, Consulate and other associates, including inside the CIA, if this, as seems probable, is the agency intended to be referred to. Diplomatic covers are the rule, not the exception. So, can you visualize the possibilities in libel suits by those who claim they are the real Mike and there was no such deal to kill the President (what else can he do, really?) or those who claim they are taken to be the McCoy/Mike?

If no agency is identified and if such ellipsis can be libellous, then you have for sure Army and Navy Intelligence, probably Air Force, and possibly Defense Intelligence Agency.

There is almost no limit on the diplomatic covers of the assorted kinds of spooks. One of whom I know was a military man, an officer, but actually listed on the Embassy staff as its doctor. But, he was a sppok, and he got caught at it. Famous case. If the part I'm telling you is not generally known. You've read a couple of chapters of the book in which he'll make a sensational appearance, I think.He was a real doctor, too.

I know that to a point such suits can help a book and make the publisher money. One of your larger competitors once tried to get me to sue him before the book that I could have sued over appeared. But what I would regard as probably extreme should not be lost sight of: if this is some kind of offbeat trap, then it is not impossible that such suits wouldbe inspired and subsidized. By its nature, there is considerable autonomy in the spookeries. (I referred to SDECE earlier. Hell, they smuggled into France, from SEAsia, including heroin.) So, what I am postulating can be either a high-level, q.t. thing or the free-lancing of a few free-wheelers.

I told you of a possibly competitive novel, by Mark Lane and a guy named Freed. I have no verified information, but the latest is a Dell original, due in April. Third-hand info, from Freed. I've never met him.

If anybody there would like to get an understanding of the sincere thinking of some of these spook types and their friends and associates, outside my files I recommend E. Howard (Watergator) Hunt's appearance on his friend Bill Buckley's show with an anti-Castro Cuban lawyer named Lazo. I've written for the text, but I have a tape.

I haven't been able to sit down and think this thing through, but I can conceive that if it is a fake it could serve my narrow interests rather than hurt them, although the latter is more likely. And if your people are putting much money into it, they might be well advised to spend a little more and get a thorough analysis for use in proving it is a fake if they are charged with it and being in a position to exploit that fully rather than getting clobbered for it. It may not be possible to pin the possible fakery (to me at this moment a certainty) of the real inspiration, but to be able to say that it was recognized as a possible fake and was printed because it seemed to be a harmless one and had considerable literary and entertainment value might add commercial values and make the book go real crazy in the marketplaces.

A few other things came to mind when I couldn't out them down. If I remember them, I'll tell you. I'm thinking of this between toher things I must do. By an odd coincidence, a major publication has been threatened with a libel suit for telling what I am sure is true that they can't prove and they've asked me for help I think I can provide. That has been competing for my little free thinking time.

Best,