Dear Jim, Skeptic Special Issue No. 9 9/11/75

While the Leiser beans still reverberated bad vibes and with Lil wanting to take in some TV drama I though perhaps a skimming of this sick stuff might be worthwhile. In two ways it was.

But it is really terrible stuff. I mean it isn't even good ripping off.

Aside from all the little clues (like listing Lane's book as Hilt 1965 and Dell 1975 when there is no Dell and there was a Fawcett 1967) and the total unoriginality except for the sickest of Newcomb's sick mind (and that is incredibly stupid), what in the world is there that any decent editor would want to print?

But is it easy to dismiss the whole thing as a cheap shot at a growing market?

I think not.

This is so terrible I think that questions have to be wondered about, including what beside commercialism lies behind it and the publisher.

The only thing I read is Bud's silliness and catalogue of self-contradictions, appropriate in a journal of learned skepticism. I almost read the Newcomb junk, more of it than anything else.

I find it interesting that there are signs of a new undergound of the rippers off. Newcomb and his pal can't be insane enough to have what they quote and not use the meat of it. This being true, someone told them. (Maybe many years ago?)

But they don't even invent good. A tracheostomy is not a buttonhole and there is no basis for that particular invention.

I could go through this thing and show that much appears in my work only. There is no point in it. Here I'm talking about what isn't entirely fictitious. (I didn't reread Sylvia's Esquire piece.)

Can any editor and an entire staff pretend to assemble an entire issue of a magazine and be entirely unaware of major wire-service stories as well as such sources one would expect them not to be unaware of in Santa Barbara as Zodiac?

You could argue from the content they are, but it isn't the way most magazines work. And in all that staff the probabilities against this are heavy.

Some inaccuracies are repeated, like the Kennedy position, never reflected accurately as of any time and certainly not accurate as of today. I can only wonder why and why those who knowing better lied.

I find the repeated references to FOIA suits described once as I recall as a flock without one ever being mentioned or identified not normal journalism, editing or skepticism.

Don't waste time on checking out the publisher, Forum for Contemporary History. But I'll bet we'd find it interesting.

This is an expensive product. This is not the kind of content that reflects any editing or content that can sell enough to justify the expensive production. I am suggesting that the money has to come from some source, particularly when there are no ads at all.

Double the price and this thing can't pay its own way.

Yet I say forget about it but thanks for the copy. We have more important matters with which to concern ourselves at the moment.

This does not make the whole thing less interesting, though.

Best,