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Dear George,

As usual, Thursday's trip to Johns Hopkins tired me and as usual I was more tired the next day, yesterday. I have to go back again Monday, which fairly effectively means two more days of not much else. Depending on the interruptions I may be responding to your letter of the 14th piecemeal.

I begin with two of these interruptions on the chance that you have continuing interest in Stone and in the event the second one develops into what may interest you. I also want a record of them for myself, for separate filing.

Dave Wrone phoned for something not related to Stone. In the course of our conversation he mentioned that he'd had a call from Ted Gandolfo. While they were speaking Gandolfo told him that he also is working for Stone. You have to know Gandolfo to understand what this says about Stone and his judgement and purposes in selecting those from whom he seeks help and what kind of people they are, what their record is, how responsible and informed.

Gandolfo, as I think I mentioned to you, long has been close to Garrison. In a number of phone calls he led me to believe if he did not state it explicitly that he arranged for publication of On the Trail of the Assassins. Save for a form letter in which he lied about me giving him money after he was allegedly burglarized and left broke, the last I heard from him was that he had arranged for joint promotional appearances for the two of them after the book was published, in the New York area. Before then a series of calls in which he told me that Jim was sending him 20 books of which I was to get one. Then a series of explanations for it not being sent. It never was.

Meagher (and not she alone) detested him as crude, irresponsible and ignorant. As with most of the others, I avoided unnecessary controversy and attempted to reduce the irrational and irresponsible with him.

He published what he refers to as a book in a xerox edition he says sold very well at about $25, mostly from a mailing list he built up from responses to many talk-show appearances and his newsletter. I gave my copy, which he gave me, to Wood. I remember no or almost no text. It consisted of the transcript of the Rules committee hearing on HSCA, some documents and letters. He did have a source or sources on HSCA despite what most people would consider his wildness and limitless affection for all conspiracy theories.

If he did work for Stone, it may well be to provide tapes of talk shows and phone conversations, his own and all other talk shows he could tape and from what he told me more than once, he tapes all his phone conversations. Amazingly enough even Blakey talked to him and once accepted a return call immediately after hanging up on Gandolfo- and was cussed out.

If he told Wrone the truth - believe Stone would have hired him at Garrison's suggestion.

I also had a call from a woman in Houston who said she is researching a JFK assassination book for a man who wants his name kept secret. The thrust of what she said, and I did not make any notes, is that he has something like a special source of special information. Her name is Sue Stanislaus (phon) and she seemed intelligent and quite rational.

Her unidentified author, she said when I said he or she could have access to what I got under FOIA, "has an office in Washington." Because she had told me he does not want to be identified I did not question her about this rather odd, to me, suggestion that he may be from Houston or Texas and may spend some time in Washington. Perhaps a lawyer?

That he is writing a book or is beginning to and wants and expects anonymity is to me strange. Well, more than just strange. Close to paranoia and reflective of what is of dubious rationality otherwise. Maybe fear?

Neither he nor she knows anything about the field or what has been published. The one book she mention is Marrs'. The only so-called experts she referred to are the Dallas nuts of whom she mentioned only Larry Howard. He apparently referred her to Lesar at AARC and he suggested she phone me.

I gave her to understand that she has been talking to nuts (she said she had begun to get that feeling), with specifics on Howard and Marrs' book.

Her guy seems to begin with the belief that just about everything is classified and I explained the reality to her. Between them neither knew I had published anything or what I have and make available. Including to them if he so desires.

Her call was Thursday evening. I told her that if he wants to speak to me not to call until after 6:30 last evening. (I wanted to be able to try to catch up with accumulated mail.) If he did not want to identify himself, OK, I'd still answer any questions. He has not phoned.

I suppose he is using her as his researcher because she, married, can work part-time and because he knows her to be competent, whether or not there is any other kind of relationship, like their being friends or his having used her for research in the past. (She does not have a Texas accent.)

In the past there have been a number of people who have claimed to have someone with personal knowledge as a source. Sometimes, true of the last one I heard from, they claim to have confessions. The impression I got is that her guy has something along this line.

It does not necessarily follow that he is a nut but it is clear that he knows nothing at all about the subject or what has been published. He could be a responsible man who has been told something he believes. And has the means to pursue it. She expressed no interest in getting any of my books or asking about any others. From this I take it that she is reflecting his approach and expressed interests and that what has been published is not of interest to him. She asked only about classified records.

You begin your letter by saying you will not address all that I raised. As of now in my thinking, without rereading my letter, I intend to refer to one of those points.

I think we should both recognize that we should have put our agrement in writing. I expected us to do that and I expected it to happen when you were here, but when you were you were more interested in getting copies of and searching for records. I have to accept responsibility for not insisting on this. If I had anticipated what developed I would have. Well, if I had anticipated anything like that we'd never have gotten started. As I told you at the outset, if you were not interested in my proposal I had in mind speaking to Dan Moldea although we had never met because I was favorably impressed with his RFK Outlook article. You also should have seen to it that we formalized our agrement in writing. When you were in Dallas in April you said we had to discuss part it, I agreed, and when you were here you made no mention of that. After that you said the same thing in a call from Washington and again never got around to it, keeping us occupied when we were together on other things.

There were, for me, certain minimum conditions and I specifed them. You seem to have changed your mind later. If I had not been under the impression that you had accepted them I'd have gone no farthur. I believe I am under this impression because you did accept them.

One was a coauthor arrangement pursuant to which we'd share evenly but in part because I expected you to take time from work and would not have that income I included in the offer your recovery of your costs from the top. It was only quite some time later that you told me your son is entering college the fall semester and you could not afford to take time off.

Aside from the fact that the idea was mine and I'd already started working on it, I disagree with your statement that you would be doing most of the work. You would have been doing the writing but even if that would have taken you longer than expected it would not begin to equal the time I had already invested by having what was available for the book. To say nothing of the cost in real terms.

What you lose sight of and what I'm sure I mentioned is that at some early point, without discussing it with ~~you~~ me, you converted me into a source and that I would not have accepted. All of your thinking that you reflect and all that you say is in this context.

You did, twice that I recall, mention wanting to discuss our agreement but that was not as you represent when we did reach a verbal agreement. The first time was from Dallas.

You are wrong in saying in the next graf that "Part of your proposal, I should add, was that I would have 'complete control over the content!" It was not "part of my proposal." It was after I believed we had reached an agreement that included what would be in the book and it was twice, not the once you cite. You forget we first spoke of this book when you expected to be sent overseas on a terrorism story that you thought would take about three weeks. Thinking you had left, after I got a copy of the script I wrote you

elliptically, because as I then said, I had to keep it confidential for a while, telling you I had a copy of the script. That was March 15.

Your first mention of any change in our agreement was in your phone call from Dallas that I take it from my letter to you of April 24 was the previous Monday. You did not indicate what changes or specifics you had in mind but I thought about it and then wrote you that the writer "must have complete independence... . If I did not trust you to be fair and accurate....I would not have broached this...." This was after we had a general agreement on the content and approach, verbally. It is this that I referred to some time later in my June 1 letter to Bradlee.

You quote my June 8 letter, "that did not... include the content of the book — what it would say." The word you omitted is "however." You also omit what precedes this and is the context in which it was said, to which I add emphasis,"We had a general agreement on the approach and content of the book,..." You also lose sight of the fact that I was addressing the outline that you did not discuss or read to me before sending it. This outline is not in accord with our agrement "on the approach and content."

With regard to your paragraph on Vietnam, you know better than what you last say,"If you want to take Prouty's word for this, go ahead." I was quite specific in telling you, among other things, that I had interviewed General Gavin, I think in June, 1967, and I know at the booksellers' convention at the Shoreham, and that he had told me that JFK had called his generals in one by one, saying that Vietnam was a political problem and political problems are not susceptible of military solutions. Gavin told me that it had been decided to return 1000 men by Xmas and after the election to get out. I've found what I wrote and I did not use Prouty as my source. I referred to the fact that he was working with Stone and that Stone would have and be able to use what Prouty gave him and said. I added that Stone would just love what you were proposing " and find it one of his most effective promotions for his terribly bad movie." I said earlier that what you proposed invited them to misuse it in their own interest. Before saying this "plays into Stone's hand" and helps him I said there are two sides, asked why antagonize either unnecessarily and thus a major share of the reader audience and remind you of the truth, "that we did agree to handle (this) in a safe, accurate and 'neutral' way." It was your suggestion by phone and I agreed to it, to say that NSAM 273 reaffirms NSAM 263, or that LBJ reaffirmed JFK on the withdrawal of that thousand, and nobody could anticipate what would or would not thereafter be possible. To respond to what Stone actually said, what you proposed was perfect. He said that LBJ changed policy "abruptly" and almost the minute of the assassination.

Of all the things we did discuss and agree on for content even if what you say is true about Garrison and the mob, it is so trivial compared to what you omit that has meaning relevance and significance, and we did not discuss and agree to anything at all about the

mob. You have it in the outline in two of only nine chapters. There is much I said by way of criticism of this part of the outline you do not refer to and conclude,"You are wrong in saying it 'beseeches unnecessary trouble.'" You do not explain this in any way. I also remind you that I noted a number of factual errors you made that I corrected. Maybe I used the words you quote elsewhere but I quote the similar sentence I used at this point, "In this I digress to note that the outline does not in any way anticipate the many and real problems the book faces and goes out of its way, for no need, even reasonable suspicion, to create additional and unnecessary problems for it, including lawsuits."

Of what I was referring to one thing should be enough given the fact that Stone has the means and ability to get great attention, attention that could wreck a book before it is on the presses: ..a jury acquitted Garrison. And my! would he and Stone proclaim persecution and pro-government prejudices. and in accuracy they'd give broad application to

Your next graf. also something we did not discuss, from your content for Chapter IX: "FBI/CIA role in frustrating the Commission from hiring its own investigators." What you say beginning at the bottom of page 1 is,"On the Warren Commission being frustrated from hiring its own investigators, you say you have 'no reason to believe it.' That suggests that at every point you do not instantly recall I would have to prove to you. I am enclosing a 1977 article I did. I misremembered a CIA role in opposing the idea, but not the FBI's. The Commission, of course, did wind up relying on the FBI and the CIA."

What you refer to in your story is in the third graf. And it does not say that the Commission was considering hiring its own investigators. It says that the day after he was sworn in, according to a tip from the CIA, the FBI believed that Rankin , not the Commission, as you said, was supposedly "considering" it and then, part omitted in copying, then only for "additional" investigation.

There is an enormous difference between an official decision by the Commission and the offhand notion by its new man on the job, who had not had time even to broach the possibility to those who made such decisions, not even to really discuss it. I was correct in saying I had no reason to believe that there was any "FBI...role in frustrating the Commission from hiring its own investigators," your words.Minus CIA.

This would have been to invite book-clobbering from all sides and would have been ruinous in reviews and stories. And is not relevant to Stone/Garrison/movie.

In the next graf of what I said we'd agreed to on handling Vietnam," that was the best approach for the article, not the book." I recall your discussing with me by phone some of the things you would say in the article as to it & in it only. but I do not recall this. Maybe you did. But how does that exclude its also being, your words, "the best approach" for the book? They are not exclusive or contradictory. If it is "best for the article," what keeps it from being "best" for the book, what I'd said? I also said that departing from this would be a boon to Stone and, in understatement, raise unnecessary problems for the book.

From your penult graf we have different recollections on omitting the script from the book. My recollection is that we agreed that what Stone had already said eliminated any need to use the script. Among the reasons, and that Time and Warners are related is not really relevant, is publisher apprehension of a lawsuit. Not a legitimate lawsuit, but a frivolous one. My do they cost! As I think I explained re Percy Foreman's threat of one, the new unspoken "libel." There are many other reasons for believing that there could not be a serious lawsuit and I informed you of some, including the wholesale distribution of scripts by Stone himself. Personally I am so little concerned about a lawsuit I've ignored his lawyers threat/demand for return of the copy I have. But in writing this to you I had already been informed by my friend in publishing that what the Post had carried would be enough to scare any potential publisher.

I skipped the to me unnecessary and unfair whips and chains bit and add nothing to what I've already said about it. You found it necessary to include, with the great amount you were excluding that we did discuss, because "they are in the script." The script was changed over Ferrie's hair. We know there have been six versions at least of the script. What if this, which is really aimed at bashing Garrison, is in the book and has been removed from the script?

As with so many things I pointed out, why run any unnecessary risk at all when there is the abundance we did discuss that entails no such risks? And you omitted.

You did not send me a copy of the agent's letter declining to represent the book but my recollection, in general, of what you read me of it is that at least in some respects I correctly anticipated the objections to the outline and what it proposed.

Quite aside from diminishing what the book could be what really surprises me is that a reporter with your experience did not consider, or if you did consider, rejected all the many points at which the outline first invites rejection and then is in so many ways self-defeating, incldding by eliminating Stone's need for his own grist mill, by delivering the grain all ground for him.

While from time to time I make and have made a few, very few, exceptions, what I have always done and said, the latter first, is consider that FOIA makes me surrogate for the people and I therefore make those records available to all. This does not include my own work and never has in any offer I've ever made. There have been a few occasions on which I may have volunteered some of this information to others but offhand I don't recall any before now, certainly not with regard to Garrison. You refer to Gary Mack and the Moorman picture, without knowing its background or the reason for my letting him borrow it. It was before the acoustical panel's report, as I recall, but perhaps later.

Jack White did some impressive photographic work with it. You know about their interpretation "Badgeman." What I saw Jack White project, from a slide, clearly shows a man. I first wrote about a man in that general area in my first book, which was completed

in mid-February, 1965. In 1967 this was confirmed for LIFE by ITEK. So, I've had an interest in the presence of one or more men in that general area from very early, when I first perceived this in a printed copy of the fifth Willis slide.

I also was and remain convinced that from the position of the man in the Moorman picture it was not possible for him to have fired any shot that struck anyone and that he could not have fired any bullet that could have been one of those people reported seeing impact. There were a number of these, if you did not know, and I recall going into at least two in my second book. I also have a file of those reported to the FBI, which ignored them all.

The purpose in lending Gary my print, which happens to be the clearest but does not have as much contrast, I'm told, as one Tink Thompson had, was for computer enhancement that might resolve the questions, including that there was or was not a weapon in the man's hands and if by any remote chance there had been, whether or not he was in a position to use or have used it. I am confident the outcome would have been consistent with my belief and would have laid that matter to rest.

My FOIA files, as you may recall, are all separate from my working files. Including my pictures, as you should recall. You've seen one of the places I keep them.

In thinking of what I say next, I am reminded that you did not mention having heard from Osnos after sending him a copy of your story. He was a fine reporter. If he did not ask for more, it is a reasonable interpretation that he anticipated problems. Anything about Stone and his Oscars ordinarily would elicit some publisher inquiry and would not be dismissed out-of-hand.

If you decide to proceed on your own, I encourage you to heed the criticisms I have made. They come from many sometimes painful experiences you have not had. I have had experiences with publishers and have some understanding of what they regard as important to them. I've had much experience defending books from attack. And with what relates to both, what I said is real and true. I might add that the standard contract defended the publisher against even frivolous suits by taking all the costs from what is due the author. Your outline will scare most publishers. Many would consider it the outline not of a book but of a long magazine article.

We disagree on what we agreed to but I do not recall, having gone over your letter again and in responding, that I made any errors. We do agree on

Regrets,

Harold

Harold Weisberg