

9/23/74

Ms. Mildred Neely
Trade News
Publishers Weekly
1180 Avenue of the Americas
New York, N.Y. 10036

Dear Ms. Neely,

From my enclosed letter ~~of~~ of August 22 to your editor, not book reviewer, and Albert Johnston's response of the 13 (not received until today) I think it is apparent that someone at PW did not understand the purpose of my writing.

While anyone wants and appreciates a review, my purpose was because I think there is news in the fact that when I had to invent the underground book to open the subject of the Warren Report I am again having to do the same thing to bring to light expeditiously what I believe people should know.

There are also other facts I believe could be publishing news. For example, check your own indexes and find what is available to people who want to buy books on the turningpoint in history the JFK assassination was.

To the best of my knowledge these "underground" books alone are available.

I do believe these and other facts should be worthy of serious trade consideration.

Together with some of my commercial experiences.

My Johnston has jumped to a conclusion that is not warranted. I am in every sense a publisher and I do to the degree they will handle my work distribute through commercial channels only. The exception is where book stores discourage individual orders and purchasers look me up in Books in Print and write me.

When you consider that in the original format the first of the Whitewash series was a best seller and the first of four reprints was for 250,000, it is precisely the readers of PW who should know about this work because there is a large buying public that will want to know. Without PW there is no way of reading the bookstores.

It will not be possible to advertise this book as I would like. The one ad I will place is my regular one in Books in Print. That won't be able to appear until long after the book is out.

The printer ran into unexpected problems, beginning with a paper strike and shortage and continuing through mechanical errors so I can't say when the book will appear. When it does I will let you know and I will send a copy on the chance that somebody at PW may agree with me that the policy Mr. Johnston states is one that is its own kind of suppression. When the New York Times asked for the 24th freebie of my first book I made them pay for it. The paper carried two half-page stories on the next two books of the series, as news, but the book-review department never did acknowledge the existence of any of the series. When more than 60 U.S. publishers rejected a work their editors predicted would be a best-seller and it became one, that isn't news in publishing? But to PW's credit, I think in your department, there was reference to the work, wholesalers stocked it and distributed it, if only long after pub date.

Please excuse the typing. When my wife is not home this is a one-man publishing operation.

Sincerely, Harold Weisberg

Publishers Weekly

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MR HAROLD WEISBERG
Coq d'Or Press
Route 8, Frederick, Md. 21701

XEROX

Dear Mr. Weisberg,

As one who has read and reviewed your books (some of them), I am pleased to answer your recent letter to the editor of PW. I am the Nonfiction Forecast editor.

I recall reviewing one of your books a couple of years ago (via Outerbridge). I am aware of the thrust of your investigatory work and writing, and want to add that I know of at least one other writer, published in a big book only a year ago, who is pursuing the theme you are committed to. I believe there will be more--because, it seems, there is a need.

I regret to say that, for policy/trade reasons, your new book will be handicapped at Publishers Weekly as elsewhere. Reason: We must adhere to the policy of informing our subscribers, who are primarily booksellers and (general) librarians, about forthcoming TRADE books available to them at the normal trade discount through established national distribution channels. Books which fall outside that margin are not reviewed in Forecasts.

Hence, while I cannot ask you to send me a copy of your new work, with a promise that I will review it, I am limited in my ability to help. There is a personal problem also as of this period: I depart for vacation next week, to return around Oct. 14.

However, if you will inform Ms Mildred Neely, of PW, about your book--possibly a copy (or jacket), plus all the pertinent facts: TITLE, PUBLISHER, AUTHOR~~S~~, PUB-DATE, PRICE, she may find it possible to mention it in her TRADE NEWS section of PW. That is her province, however, and all I can do is suggest that you contact her. She should be informed of your earlier works from WHITEWASH on--and whatever plans you may have for your new book. If it is already officially published, however, there may be a hitch: PW both in Forecasts and Trade News is committed, advance information about books.

Best wishes,

Albert H. Johnston
ALBERT H. JOHNSTON PW

August 22, 1974

Editor, Publishers' Weekly
1130 Avenue of the Americas
New York, New York 10036

Dear Editor:

If you were with PW eight years ago, you may remember WHITEWASH: THE REPORT ON THE WARREN REPORT. It was, I believe, the first so-called "underground" book.

PW, alone in the publishing industry, treated it fairly. It was not, in my view, really "underground". And I remain a publisher, albeit the country's, if not the world's, smallest.

Soon there will be the fourth of the WHITEWASH series. When it appears, I will let PW know. Its appearance is not the purpose of this letter. Rather are the recollections of the past eight years.

I believe there is a story that would be informative to large publishers and interesting to your general readers.

Large publishers learned nothing from it. Not even when WHITEWASH became a best-seller in its original format and in reprint did one come to me for the sequel. Or ask me if there was to be one.

The assassination of John Kennedy and its official investigation certainly were and remained at least topical events. But until I gave up on established publishers and without a cent of capital became my own, no book on this subject appeared.

Check your own indexes on this turning point in American history and see what books about it are available. You will, I believe, find mine only. They are all still selling. Yet I never had a cent for promotion or advertising and the only ad I have ever placed is the small one I carry in Books In Print.

The prestigious and stuffy New York Times book section would not acknowledge the existence of this first work on so significant a subject. (I made the Times pry for copies beginning with the 14th!) Or those that followed it. There were no reviews, before or after publication, where all publishers seek them, and few printed mentions. There was no distribution of any kind arranged prior to publication. In spite of this and other major disadvantages, it was a best-seller.

The coming book will face greater handicaps. But it is coming. I am confident, if, as with the first, these handicaps will reduce the sale enormously, they will not mean failure. These new handicaps, I believe, are still another commentary on some aspects of the publishing industry, costly to publishers.

If there is anyone in particular to whom you would like me to send the review copy, I would appreciate a label.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg