

Dear Hal:

Just to prove yours is not the world's oldest home typewriter, this infernal machine of mine is being pressed into service. My secretary of long standing has ventured off to New York for a spell - and I am not inclined to let another gawk at this particular matter.

The main theme I can glean from your letter of the 23rd is that you are pressing yourself far too hard and spreading your time too thin. However worthwhile, you simply cannot hatch this boundless nest of enormous eggs all by yourself, even though you are, undoubtedly the most academically oriented of all critics. And time alone should tell you.....there just isn't time.

Allow me to think toward the end of constructive accomplishment.....

While I am more concerned with proliferation via mass aural/visual means, the primary task at this juncture remains literary. Let me suggest several avenues to assist. I might preface my remarks by telling you that I number amongst my closer friends some Senior officers at both the Hearst and Time-Life upper corridors. Needless to say, we differ in both substance and degree of conviction. I'm sure you've met with the same response along Madison Avenue; albeit you invented the "bomb" and I propose to aim it.

There are several venturesome publishers out thisaway, such as Ed Keating at Ramparts. Aside from gaining a (rapidly rising) platform in an excerpting excursion, Ramparts could afford you additional alignment for publishing of complete works. Do you know Keating? Ever discussed any possible association? His office is just around the corner from mine; I can scoot over if you like. (I'm aware a couple of his staffers did a piece on the deal.)

The motion picture deal I propose could provide the overall project with one paramount resource that now appears lacking: Development capital. In effect, I intend to put together a Prospectus/Proposal for Columbia which will provide "production" capital in exchange for equity and distribution options. A portion of this capital can and would be assigned to script development, under your supervision, which would mean retaining of an investigative staff, etc. In other words, the orderly refinement of materials for your aptly titled Documentary (Document Airing?) could be incorporated into the broader project. This would allow you to mother hen both the literary and scenerio/script aspects simultaneously without wasteful distention.

I have no idea how much persuasive horsepower your NY agent has with publishers, etc., but his task is immense. Your approach to the subject is so incredibly incisive; that you alarm a great many of our ostriched business and political leaders is most understandable. It

may well be that your enthusiasm to seek and demand justice in this most tragic of historical pages goes beyond the level of tolerance of our lemming-like society.

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This is being resumed the following day.....

Just overnight several of my original thoughts have been modified. It appears a corporate pogrom has occurred at Ramparts, with Ed Keating being removed as President and Publisher. What an irony that such fine-intentioned Liberals should succumb to the avaristic habits usually attributed to grubby old Conservatives.

I attended a private reception for Woody Allen last night (at which was shown an incredibly boobish thing called "Casino Royale".) Even Allen was embarrassed. Whatever, on the basis of a jestful quote from his current patter (see clipping from local Herb Caen column), I asked him what depth his interest went on the matter. He stated that he first became aware of the substance of the critics' position when he casually attended a Mark Lane speech in New York last year. From that point on, his interest heightened, although he hasn't read with any great depth. Our ensuing conversation led to a decision for us to continue same during his engagement here at the hungry i. Allen's access to the higher eschelons at Columbia would be invaluable; his "corporate" assistance would also lend considerable substance. My thesis on project advancement is somewhat founded on the inherent addage that there is security in numbers mathematically and biologically.

I also had lunch yesterday with Seymour Ellison, Mel Belli's partner. He confided the background as to how Belli wound up being Ruby's 1st attorney. It seems that within hours of Ruby's killing Oswald, Ellison received a call from a former colleague in Las Vegas, identified by him as a mouthpiece for "the syndicate" in Vegas and Los Angeles. The main theme put forth was ethnic, meaning "one of our boys (Jewish)" needs help and we want the best lawyer in the country to get down there to help him. Ellison was told "a million dollars is in it for Belli", which (believe me) circumvented any other consideration. Belli then did what he is so capable of: He opened his mouth and in came the gullible press and both his feet. Once committed, at least by the elusive cannons, a lawyer must follow through. However, immediately after Mel's public statement ala Eisenhower ("I shall go to Dallas!"), Ellison received word from his original source that the deal was off, period. Belli was stuck with a dead rat in his already-stuffed kisser, which ultimately cost him over \$50,000 in out-of-pocket expenses. And "the syndicate" was mum.

Now, in retrospect, Ellison feels that the "boys" (all of whom knew Ruby and had various and sundry dealings with him) very quickly received some information on Ruby's involvement which made him too hot to try and save. Rather than chance identification in a matter that might blow everyone out of sight, they simply renigged - and let Belli float the whole show. I might add that Ellison's stature in the partnership (Belli, Ashe, Gerry Ellison and Cone) dropped considerably.

Again, I will bow to your expertise to relate or collate this piece of the puzzle. But, it does seem significant.

I've read The Post's article by Jim Phelan; also heard him interviewed at length this AM on Joe Dolan's radio show this morning. While the circumstantial elements of the case seem right, the handling of Russo's statements have been stupidly conceived and extracted. Shaw's counsel are going to wipe out Russo's testimony in short order, I'm sure. I'll be most interested in hearing your version of the New Orleans maelstrom. Mark Lane has given his blessings to Garrison's whole ballgame, and for the sake of sustaining public confidence in the pursuit alone let's hope he doesn't get trapped. I realize you don't hold much truck with Lane's motivation, but his tenacity has kept the balloon on the rise.

Also saw in W. Winchell's column a reference to "another book on JFK" titled: "OSWALD: The Truth.", which he says claims to name the names of the actual conspirators. Know anything about the author or substance of his tract? Incidentally, I picked up (for a lousy buck!) a copy of that LBJ-encouraged drivel by Charlie Roberts of Newsweek. Arrghhh..... If one can wade through Fat Pierre Salinger's pap in the beginning, he is guaranteed the longest trip through the shallowest waters of literary fakery yet on record. (Oops, damned near forgot the Spector-Liebeler Report.)

Incidentally, although WHITEWASH is the unfettered correct statement of what has transpired, might I suggest a modification of titles after WHITEWASH III roles out. Perhaps the "collector's version" might better be called THE WEISBERG PAPERS, with a sub-addendum of the original subtitles. In my opinion, yours is a work that deserves a more subtle, scholarly frame of reference. Certainly more influential persons would not tend to turn away from the brittleness of your current title. It's only a thought for your contemplation.

In closing, let me once again stress the need to expedite granting me the necessary clearance to open discussions with Columbia, etc. out here. It won't take me long to put together a production nucleus once you give me the go ahead. Just don't strangle the deal with agents.

Continued good speed and fortune. I look forward to receiving the New Orleans book just as soon as it becomes available.

Best Personal Regards,

John G. Christian

JGC:jgc