

10/29/71

Mr. Ned Crosby
Minn.

Dear Ned,

I have just spoken to Harold subsequent to speaking with you, and the issues are pretty clear in my head. There seem to be misunderstandings on both sides, and, of course, violent disagreements. But I strongly feel the issue must be resolved. Harold needs help in getting his work out. You have given him the opportunity to do this, and he has given you the opportunity to make a substantial--perhaps the most substantial contribution to the field.

From talking to you, I got the impression that you (or Harold) were not clear as to what your responsibilities were. As for rewriting the book, you conveyed the idea to me that your agreement was to take the 3-volume work, take its best, most persuasive and soundest arguments and its best evidence and put it all together into one coherent, well written/well-organized book. Harold calls this a popular condensation, but he means the same thing. This is great, and by all means, it must be done.

But my conversation with you leaves me with doubts as to whether you are content to let this be your only responsibility. Namely, I get the impression that you think it is incumbent on you that you make additions to the work--which involves injecting your own philosophy and your own interpretations. This is dangerous, especially because you are dealing with an area which you probably do not fully understand, as much as you may know about and as intelligent and sincere as you may be. I am confident that you do not understand as Harold does and that is not a slur against you but merely a compliment of Harold. His understanding of this is incredible, is to be respected, and (I would say) should pretty much be left alone. Additions can seriously detract from Harold's interpretation. You are supposed to be taking Harold's work and Harold's interpretations and putting them into a form which is condensed, more coherent, and more marketable. I really think you should perceive your mandate more narrowly and not take it upon yourself to make additions and changes in doctrine.

If you think I am moralizing or speaking without sufficient knowledge, let me give you some examples of specific incidents.

I got the impression from speaking to you that you intend or would like to interview certain people connected with the Commission for addition to the book. I am sure Specter would be on your list. Indeed, you requested my notes of my interview with Specter (which I must decline for the time being, but may provide if my book is published). Now I would tell you emphatically not to go to these people. I have dealt with many of them on a basis on which they probably have not been dealt with before. To a degree they were sucked in because they assumed naivety went along with my age. But I put serious charges to these people, gave them the opportunity to clear themselves, explain things, make confessions, etc. They never did. They are all dishonest, unscrupulous, and (I think) without conscience. They are just bad men, especially people like Specter, who may be the worst. He does not have a soul. There is absolutely nothing you will get from him, and there is harm in contacting him for he can milk you for what you know. He tried this

with me, with little success. He is scared, no doubt, but he is incredibly cool about this thing. What do you expect from him anyway? Certainly you do not expect him to break down and confess. And not even confess to "crimes" or "immoral acts," but merely to departure from acceptable tactics, let's say. He won't budge. Please do not entertain the notion that these guys will be swayed or moved if you can smother them in documentation. They are impervious to it. I have written pages and pages in the hopes that something could be done by laying it on the line and giving these people irrefutable documentation. Nothing! No result. They just shrug it off, because they know they can get away with it. Even if it got out and published, it wouldn't receive enough attention to harm them, especially if they are well respected by their colleagues, as most are.

So, not meaning to sound hysterical, I am seriously concerned that you could consider going to these people and hoping to use them as additions to Harold's work. If Harold objects to this as intolerable, I would agree with him. If you want to interview them all and write your own book on it, using your own work and research, then by all means do it. I wish you the best. But for heaven's sake do not tamper with Harold's work in this way. He too knows these people well, knows what they are like. His judgement here is sound and proper and you would do well to heed it if you are merely rewriting his book, as you are supposed to be doing.

On the matter of whether or not blame goes to the Kennedies (which Jerry mentioned to me) let me begin by saying that the issue is not that terribly important, especially in light of the other evidence addressed in the book. My feeling is that Bobby was put into a position politically in which he could make no waves. True, he did go beyond what he needed to do in such a position and for that I lose all respect for him and look upon him as ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ an unmanly coward of no integrity. The way Harold has this material now, it is political in that it provides an out for the Kennedies. I get the impression you would have it so that the Kennedies escape no blame. If you and Harold cannot compromise on it (and by God I think a compromise on this is the only answer--don't protect the Kennedies but be sympathetic to the political situation) then throw the damn thing out. ~~MM~~ When the other material is so much more important, you can't get stuck on things like this.

I realize the financial arrangements you have with Harold (as I understand them) are not to your advantage. But there is something I think you must realize from this field: there is no longer the chance of financial benefit, especially with material as hot as Harold's. I think when you originally made the offer, your motives were the best and most unselfish. Perhaps now you have come to think or have been persuaded to think that you have merely set yourself up for a rotten deal with absolutely nothing in it for you. That may be materially true. The benefit you would produce would not be financial. It would be a public service. Admittedly, one must have an extraordinary amount of devotion, public spirit, and generosity to make this sacrifice. But I think it is unrealistic to approach the thing expecting material gain. This material must be put before the public and obviously Harold cannot do it himself. I understand you have a great amount of money, and that properly is

your own business. But you did make this offer to Harold indicating your willingness to incur great loss to have this material put before the public. The gesture was noble and quite admirable. Many would consider you a fool for making such a deal. I would not because I think it was a great thing for you to do.

I gather from Harold that you think there is a real market for his material put properly into a book, that there will be an interested and eager public. I hope you do not think this way, for it is unrealistic, contrary to my own experience, and will probably hurt you. The public has lost interest in this and so has the press, which never really assumed its responsibility in this in the first place. With all the cries about freedom of the press now, still most publishers are incredibly reluctant to touch such hot stuff. And with a public that has more pressing problems to worry about than a topic which has been hashed and rehashed for them, you could hardly expect a market for even the hottest, most sensational book. You simply have to have more modest expectations, which means that you cannot expect a best-seller or even a seller that will enable you to break even. As I tried to say before, this is a great investment and sacrifice the rewards of which, if any, cannot be expected to be lucrative.

Ned, from our conversation and from my talk with Harold, I have a very high opinion of you and consider your motives among the most noble. However, I think you are in a position ~~XXXXX~~ in which, even unintentionally, you can exert great pressure on Harold to force changes in the book. You are both sensitive of this. Harold may be stubborn as a mule, but in this case, from my perspective and considering what I know, I am in general sympathy with Harold because I think he has the right to expect you to rewrite his book using only his material and his interpretations. This was the agreement. You may be making great sacrifice and taking a tremendous loss. But that does not entitle you to change the doctrine of Harold's work. This, I think, is how Harold feels he is being bought and why he will not stand for it. He is a very principled man with great foresight. He fears that while you may not be consciously "buying" him now, you may look back on this and see the situation in a new light.

If you are still willing to make the sacrifice, then I strongly urge you to come to terms with Harold on the basis that you are re-writing his book exactly as you described to me, with no additions and no changes in doctrine. This issue is so very important and the opportunities so promising that it just tears at me to see all go down the drain because of your differences.

Please excuse all the typos and faulty grammar in this hastily written letter from an overworked student.

Best wishes,

cc Harold, Jerry