

11/5/71

Dear Gary,

Your letter of the 2 is all I've yet opened of what came today. I want to get that costly disaster out of my mind to the degree I can as fast as I can, so I acknowledge it. I'll lay this aside until I hear from you again, for by this writing you have Ned's letter, which you can evaluate personally before you get my long response. I really should not have taken the time for it, but I felt I owe it to Ned, who I liked. The more I think about this the more I am upset. Practically none of it bears any relationship to your representation. I do not fault you for this or your intent.

I think I can be blunt with you without offending you, for you know I wouldn't do that. But what this adds up to is a mixture of well-intended naivete and bullshit. The pursuit of perfect is an endless perfection. There is so much we now know in other areas that your concept is a childish one. Are we to do the "definitive" work before so much is done? I've got more to write than I've written.

Summarizing what you represent as Ned's agony over ours, what it amounts to is adding to it needlessly, wasting much time for us and even the relatively small amount of money is great for us. We can't even afford to feed him. I regret that he is like all other rich people I've met, so worried about being imposed upon because he is rich that he winds upon imposing upon the impoverished and is impervious to it. I don't think this was his intent. It is what he did. He is cheap as hell, frankly.

But in even your representation, this thing is senseless and out of contact with reality. I did subject that work to critical analysis by those better able than you or Ned. I asked others of similar qualification. You know I always do this. What you say is further irrelevant because despite his intelligence and his overweening opinion of it and his non-existent instant comprehension and instant knowledge, he is not qualified for the role in which he cast himself.

Gary, I love you like you were my own son, as I hope you have come to feel. I am without question of your good intent. But you didn't think this through and you report inaccurately. Ned started changing his formulation of his own role from the first without consultation with me. It is an indecency and it wound up insulting me grievously. If you can read his own representation in his own letter and draw anything else from it I'll be astounded. Lil is more distressed than I can tell you, and when our situation has had her hiatal hernia troubling her for months, she has since Ned was here been almost unable to sleep, has to exist on soup, etc. Being fleeced out of more than \$4200 and the potential of the book by Q&D and this atop that all at one time and atop all the other serious things with which we have to live is just too much. I/we just have to forget it and Ned, whose ego is equalled by few I know, fortunately very few.

It seems to me, to address one other thing you did, that the most important single thing is getting information out-now.

This has hurt us both very much in many ways. I've going to have to become the hermit I've talked of becoming. But I don't think anyone has ever come as close to calling me a literary whore as Ned did, and that I find intolerable and inconsistent with any decent concept of himself, what he can or cannot do, condemn for my "agony" or the possibility of any accomplishment. Perhaps the least tolerable part is his total unawareness of it. This is an arrogance I can't recall finding in the others with whom, to my regret, I have come in contact. It is more than the apparently natural arrogance of wealth.

Best regards,

Dear Harold,

11-2-71

Your letters of 10-27 and 10-29 arrived today and I decided to stay up late and answer them immediately. It is painful to hear of your frustration and anger and to have seen Ned experiencing similar discomfort. Before dealing with the more important issues you raise, let me briefly answer the question as to why I suggested that Ned contact Sylvia: because she might know something you didn't, or be able to help find out more about any plans of Wecht's, or be able to help any or all of us deal with the potential locked up in the X-rays and photos. As for the question of interviewing additional people, it is not a question, as you seem to pose it, as to who has done the most or best work in this area, but a question as to whether it is possible that someone else could add meaningfully to what you have done. It is further a question as to whether we could not tie some loose ends together, prevent instant rebuttal as soon as the book is out, and better describe the history of the event. If you are saying that you have done the definitive investigative work and the most in terms of scope and volume, I heartily agree. If you are saying that you have done all that needs to be done, made only correct decisions, are the top expert in every area of the case in in all areas related to it such as how to convince different types of people, I heartily disagree.

As for the questions which relate directly to Ned, since I don't have carbons of my letters and am not in a position to be a judge of what went on between you for either of you, let me review my perception of my relationship to Ned and this affair. First of all, I was all but retired from the case when Ned came along. We got together, through a mutual friend, because we each had a similar interest in changing the political views of those in the power structure who have more power than a thousand people like myself. We inadvertently got to discussing the assassination, and Ned got interested. He was so critical and played such a skeptical devil's advocate that I had to sharpen and question many of my own views on the case. At one point, or perhaps more than once, I was ready to give up because it seemed impossible. Then, at some point, he began to come around and my view, which I may have written you, that his interest was transitory and somewhat hard to explain, changed. When he began making contacts with you it was clear that his concerns had reached a point where he might become seriously involved. It was unique for me to be able to deal with someone with the money and position to get some things going, and who could aid such efforts as your own. I was happy to hear of his agreement with you, and both of you seemed happy. I felt that Ned would be an ideal person, certainly better than myself, to write a critical introduction which would present the reasons for doing such a book or even being still interested in the case, which would be careful enough for a lawyer but simple enough for a beginner. This bringing of the evidence into an immediate context would assure that only the confirmed skeptic could ignore the contents of Post Mortem. It would also serve to give the reader the benefit of your earlier works and the discoveries of the critics in general. I suppose in my imagination it would be finally not only the definitive work, one which could stand on its own, but the one which would finally point towards high level involvement. No other book has successfully done this for a wide range of people. I have been speaking on this subject more than any critic I know of, with the possible exception of yourself, although I expect that my record compares, for a number of years and have been recommending your books along with others. Despite the hard work and incredible detail in your books and those of others, many people who are open-minded and interested are disappointed in them. None of the critical books really seemed to have "clout," although all did for some people. Naturally not everyone could be reached, but all too many did not come away from the critics books

with an idea as to exactly what was wrong with our govt. Both Ned and I, as I understand it, do agree that the principal thing is that the book should make a difference to more than just a few people. At this late date such is especially the case.

When Ned did his first few chapters and I agreed to read them, I had expected the same skeleton outline he had set up for the arguments he prepared before consulting people of influence. I had expected a summarized version of PM to follow. He began with the summary instead. My own feeling was that it could not stand alone and that the basic arguments and questions had to be laid out so the reader would get into the book. I found myself asking the very same questions he had asked of me when I had first tried to present him with the case. At that point some of the confusion we both had become apparent. Ned realized, at least as he had written the stuff down, there were some unanswered questions. He already had questions about which were the stronger arguments, and I reinforced them. He realized that his end of this thing was not at all clear. He knew that he was convinced that you had much vital info, as was I, and that it should reach as many people as possible. He knew that he, as well as I, had come to empathize with your years of agony which we had not really experienced ourselves, although I had experienced a little. These things had come out in what he already had completed. What was not clear is whether more research was needed in some areas and whether Ned was in full agreement with the structure of your arguments and amounts of emphasis given to various things. While Ned had originally agreed to be an editor who would actively edit for length and clarity, and who would add his own comentary, he had ended up trying to summarize your book without altering it. This would have been fine if he personally agreed with it to that degree, and if he would personally feel comfortable with his name on it. He had apparently lost sight of that and suddenly came face to face with the fact that the time and energy involved (money was a minor consideration at all times from my viewpoint) from his point of view he had to be certain, in his opinion, that the book would do what he wanted. Obviously, this is what you or I would feel, and what you do in fact feel. That your hard work should end up being presented the way you feel is important, or in a way in which you feel it will be effective. Ned realized when he came to see you that you would likely and rightly expect that your views would prevail since this is the result of your research. But Ned also felt, from my understanding, that if he devoted the time and effort to this which would be necessary, and ground his thesis work in the interrim, that the final product should be perfect in his eyes. I personally feel that the agreement, which was vague without specific examples, became more real in its implication after he put something in writing. Despite the disappointment involved to both of you, I'm glad that Ned went through this process early in the game so that this confrontation could occur, though I would never had predicted this outcome. And, by the way, along the lines of the questions of effectiveness of argument, I advised Ned to challenge my views and his by considering having some others examine what he had done, hoping to get critical comments. My speaking audiences have taught me what to say and what is effective, something which is difficult for a critic to judge.

At present I still have hopes that some sort of accord can be reached which will enable you to publish your work. I hope that it gets the attention that the info it contains deserves, but fear that a more popularized version would be more likely successful. I am too exhausted to write any further at present and will try to write again this weekend. I hope that this letter has been somewhat clear. If not please ask questions. I will keep an carbon. Give my regards to Lil. Ned says that he will write and try to further clarify things--he will have to speak for himself. Please look after yourself,

Gary