

Rt. 12, Frederick, Md. 21701
12/21/76

Mr. Richard Curtis
156 E. 52 Street
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Dear Dick,

Thursday of last week I saw Bud Fensterwald, who knows Geller, who owns Zebra, and knows his interests in books on political assassinations, in particular about King's, because he asked Bud for such a book and Bud told him I am the only one to do it. Bud knows my work because he was Ray's chief counsel for several years.

What Bud told me makes me more impatient, more anxious because of other circumstances. As a writer you can understand some - my work is being stolen and it has already been misused counterproductively in a subject that means much to me.

Bud told me quite frankly that the book Zebra asked of him is really not much of a book. Yet they gave him a \$20,000 advance on it. And that Zebra wants everything they can get on the subject. Well, I have done more work on the subject than anyone else, most of the original work and have several books researched and partly written.

The market is not only with Zebra. Prentice-Hall has given a real whore, Mark Lane, a fat advance for a King assassination book that is part ripoff of my work and part fabrication, without seeing a thing from Lane.

The lack of both a deal and an advance handicaps me much. It limits what I can do, much more now than when I sent you the draft. Now to rush out a draft I'll have to find and pay a typist. My wife has her own life this time of the year. She is a tax consultant. Not only is this her life and a source of gratification to her, she is fantastically good at it and many people do depend on her. My chances of finding a research assistant who has any knowledge of the subject and is any good are reduced by the hirings of the new Congressional committee.

Were none of these things true it remains true that I have done all the original investigating, really all the original non-legal work, and the subject has been hot now for some months. I have almost eight years invested in it. If I do not do something now, especially when I'm pushing 64, when will I?

This is why I wrote you a week ago. It is a month since you asked my phone number so you could speak to me. In this time I could have completed a draft and have engaged the help I need for greater efficiency. Meanwhile, I have every reason to assume that Geller is looking around elsewhere. And that others in the market also are.

You may well be busy on other matters. Most of us are. I am still starting the day before 5 to get as much done as I can. And the last thing I want is to go off on my own. But when Bud tells me what he has and can get me right in what am I to do? I have no choice but to accept his offer if I do not hear from you promptly.

I know what this book can do with promotions because I know that what I have done and am doing is without precedent on any subject. Imagine - I am getting every FBI record in the second largest investigation in its history. I have gone over thousands, have 2700 in hand I've not had a chance to look at and am receiving hundreds more every week. What a backstopping for a book, what a rich vein for a good flack to mine.

The potential is even greater. The first parts of this book deal with the failure of the system of justice. The last part will have the new evidence, my own original work, that can reopen the case, with a ready market for that in an existing committee. His official market will exist even if the committee's life is not extended in the new Congress.

Hastily, impatiently, hopefully,

Dear Bud,

12/21/76

Enclosed is my this morning's letter to the agent I've never met. He wrote me glowingly a month ago and since then silence. The letter I told you I had written him was only a week ago.

I've been thinking more about what you said Thursday. For reasons other than you know, some of which I'll indicate.

If you can arrange for Geller to see me I'll go to New York. I have transportation, so far as I now know, except for ~~election~~ inauguration week. That week and any I do not have a way to and from D.C. I can drive to the local bus station, take a bus to Baltimore and catch the Metroliner there.

If he wants to print much on the assassinations I can provide much, some of which can be quite popular, as The King Conspiracies can be. As long as there is fidelity to fact and reality there is very little in editing and cutting I would not agree to if it would return enough to make the rest of my work possible and easier.

Had it not been for the thrombophlebitis and the many disinformation activities of the past year I might well have done this book myself, had it out by now and I think made a success of it.

These ~~disinformation~~ disinformation activities do concern me much. Mark is berserk and has begun a real job for the FBI, oblivious, not caring or both. The Committee is off on a real bummer. Believe me, I know. This is one of the reasons I have written you as I have. I know some of what has gone on in executive sessions because the members are talking to those who talk to me. I have not even taken an initiative. Jim can tell you that when he got the transcript of the part of the 11/16 session that was public it confirmed what I had told him. Really I understated.

If Zebra really ^{does} have an interest in the subject, which can be as commercially successful as any other now, we can do much and I think it can mean much to a new publisher whose promotional skill are already demonstrated.

With the work I have already done I can become a property for them.

For me they can mean I do not have filing accumulating all the time, as spending so much of my time in the non-productive.

Besides an interest and the willingness to do the commercial in the commercial way all they'll require is a competent editor. And after the end of the tax season I'll be able to do the retyping again. Given my typing, the way I have to sit to do it now and my handwriting, retyping is essential. Especially because of the pace at which I can work. Many times I've turned out 10,000 words a day. Of course at this speed it shows.

Once I've finished with The King Conspiracies I'm confident I could finish Agent Oswald in two months. Events have dated parts of the chapters already done. It could go crazy in the market right now.

If you have heard nothing from me by the 27th please go ahead with whatever you had in mind. I'd really like it to be in a form that might enable me to turn Geller on by indicating to him what is possible from what I have already done.

The records I've been getting and going over lack anything of overtly sensational value. With some of my earlier work, with what I know and others do not, there is value. What these earlier records do show is that immediately the FBI did launch a first-rate and extraordinarily extensive straight police investigation, sparing nothing in tracking down the available leads. The largest were in tracing laundry marks and all the Galts in the world. On their own they developed much of what was later attributed to Huie. Except for things like this there is nothing for the average book writer in them. He'd probably become an FBI buff. Best,