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Dear Harold:

I've been trying to get a decision out of Zebra, believe me, but it hasn't been easy. But I've talked to Roberta Grossman and I'm afraid she's not high on the book. She feels it does say a lot about who didn't do it, but doesn't really pinpoint who did do it -- the assassination, I mean. I'm still trying to get her to say yea or nay but it's going to carry through the holidays. I've interested her in reprinting the Whitewash books in mass market paperback, and that too I hope will be resolved immediately after the New Year.

So I appreciate your patience and will be back to you in a couple of weeks.

Until then, all the best.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'Richard Curtis', written over a horizontal line.

RICHARD CURTIS

12/27/76

Dear Dick,

Thanks for your note of the 22d. It did not come until today because it did not get into the mail until the 23rd. Fortunately I also received a shipment of file cabinets for which the delivery man/friend helped me make room and that took the entire morning. So I was ~~able~~ able to do anything, as I'd planned.

This has nothing to do with you. It has to do with the problem you face and my long experience that makes me appreciate that it is a problem.

I also can understand some of what is in Barbara Crossman's thinking. I'll try to address that in a way that can help them whether or not they and we have anything to do with each other.

Everybody wants neat, simple packages on all the difficulties in life and life is not that way. All publishers and some readers want pat solutions to these major crimes and here it is not only that life is not that way, it is that the crimes are not and time is running on ~~the~~ the kind of fraud that was so profitable for Zebra with McDonald. That book, regardless of how skilled a con man McDonald is in his personal appearances, is a conscious, deliberate fraud and I sure as hell can prove it. I have to a publisher who really went for the b.s. because of its commercial potential. But his lawyer knew he would tempt prosecution because officialdom did not like him.

There are drastic changes in the situation, including in the market potential and the odds on kicking back. There are extraordinarily few authentic experts. There are nuts, self-seekers, a few intelligent and concerned people who at their best are underinformed and there are those who do officialdom's dirty work. But officialdom is about to change. I am not projecting certainties but I am saying there are now risks that no wise publisher will undertake in keeping after the kind of garbage represented by McDonald's fiction.

If it had not served the needs of Ford and his cronies and the disinformational purposes of the CIA and FBI, do you for a minute think it would be immune from prosecution? These are rare, but one cost me Pocket's publication of Whitewash when they predicted it would be the best-selling book of 1965.

This is further complicated by the existence of what to now is a very bad Congressional committee. We do not know and no publisher can forecast what they will do, what they will beg in doing, what they may be forced to do or what changes they may not be able to avoid.

What this means is that those books which pretend to be non-fiction and which give "solutions" of the crime not only face the risk of prosecution but a much greater risk, of the publishers facing disasters over the wreckage that can result when the bindings are glued.

I know everything except the names in the King assassination. I know more about that crime than any non-official in the world, as the FBI certified I do with the JFK assassination. In the JFK case they ever certified that I know more about it than anyone left in the FBI and threw in knowledge of their investigation.

I knew enough to ruin any fake book and to demand prosecution of frauds. I am at the point where I will. The situation has changed enough so I may have allies and those interested in this happening.

One of the reasons I wrote the King Conspiracies as I did is because I had no publisher. Another is an accurate perception that a Congressional investigation was coming. I forecast it in a 4/75 speech at NYU law school. My experience told me that another whitewash and coverup were coming. I began by addressing that and by doing the job of the committee for it. In a decently edited form as conceived and begun this book will do that and it can control the disinformation that is well begun. It covers both sides.

When it is finished it will be the basis for a legal reopening of the case as distinguished from the committee's. Now what in the hell else does it take for a successful, even an important book?

I have explained to you that while I'm getting suppressed evidence and do not have a contract and do not have any help I would be a jackass to try to write the last parts of the book. Once this situation changes I could finish a draft in a month and it would be definitive.

Zebra does not have to take my word for it if Fensterwald's assurances mean nothing to them. They can send any good criminal lawyer they want and I'll show him more than enough in a half hour after he understands the charges. What will make this much more dramatic, especially with the first-person approach of the parts in a draft, is that I am now getting in these suppressed official records official confirmation of my own original investigation.

(Obviously when this happens weekly the more I have written the more I have to rewrite until the time for the writing is here. For me that is the time when I have a decent contract.)

I am not unaware of time pressures. When you first told me that Zebra might have some interest the first thing I did was write a bright young man who has had some investigating experience and has done some work on the JFK case and ask him to consider becoming my research assistant. For this I need an advance. I have lost him now. The committee grabbed him. However, their whoring with fact is such that I can see the time coming when he might be willing to quit or might want to. The question here is can they be turned around. Turning them around completely is impossible. Less is not only possible but I have every reason to believe I have begun doing it. I went after the DJ lawyer they had running the thing part. I went after him hard. He is no longer with them and he was one of the first at the top. But I can do nothing about the time pressures without a good contract. I have too much in this now to accept anything less than a good contract. My experience tells me that unless a publisher offers one he will not do his part with any book.

It appears that Zebra has good publishing and commercial judgement in wanting to publish all it can on the political assassination. It also appears that they are indulging bad judgement that this either means crap or that there is not a point at which crap can't be given away or truth can't be sold. They can do what they seem to want to do easily if they can ever come to see that there is money in other than ripping off the public mind, as they did with McDonald and will do with Fensterwald. Even he says he can't see what they wanted of him in commercial or meaningful terms. They gave him a \$20,000 advance for nothingness. It is so bad that the one part checked with me is totally wrong. Except perhaps for spelling. Yet they have already touted this as the best and most definitive work yet ever. They can do what they seem to want to do through me and by making it easier for me to do what they want. Just about all the basic work in both assassinations is mine. I can do other books fairly rapidly if I have good help. And until these crimes are solved and all the controversy over the FBI and CIA is ended there is a waiting market.

If they can conceive what most paperbackers do not there is a long-time market, especially in colleges. I have not gone over today's mail. My wife tells me that at \$6.00 we have one order for 15 of the oldest books from one store. This without any advertising or promotions in more than 10 years. (I'll package them to the evening TV news.)

I will see if there is any way in which I can help you. If I can I'll let you know. It may be possible. Meanwhile, it might not be a bad idea if Zebra deliberated the other side, what will happen to them if they keep on the the b.s. and invest all they do in it and either I get a publisher and have reason to go after their disinformational b.s. or just have to because it becomes a necessity because they are for all practical purposes extensions of the FBI and CIA. To now they are.

They realize this is a live subject and that it will be. To now the books that have made money fall into two categories: those that were expertly promoted regardless of content and those that had no commercial promotion and made money on content. In the second category I am alone. In the first there are three, McDonald's, Lane's first and to a lesser degree Epstein. All the other books have either failed miserably or have not made money. Warner is taking a long-shot with a debasement of the mind by a crook (convicted) named Morrow.

I've just had to reprint my least successful book.

With the changes that are here I can be a hot commercial property. I can make a publisher money if publishing people can look at publishing history on this subject and just play the odds.

I'm a bit disappointed that Zebra can't see the prestige value in all of this. They are new and they have a demonstrated capability in promotions. Can it be that all they can see themselves promoting and selling is garbage?

They are not as innocent in this as may appear to you. They knew the McDonald book was a fabrication. I was twice a consultant on it. The second time cost them \$25,000 and god knows how many sales because it was a market selling of the ancillary rights. If they did not know McDonald and John Starr, one of his agents, did know. Starr almost lost bowel control when he saw me at the first conference. When it was over he still had not realized what had happened. He knows me. He was my agent for a while. I am still awaiting royalty statements on the sale of the book I turned over to him. I can't break confidence on this but if anyone tells you who that publisher was and the name of his counsel as McDonald and his agents and the crew of lawyers they had buttressing him can, you can learn what I can do to a fink book if I am asked to or just want to.

If they get to a point where they might want to talk to me or see some of the evidence I have and will be using, as I presume Barbara Grossman could not understand, I'll go to New York. If that time comes please try to arrange some time so we can talk about other things. I have lots of commercial properties I do not want to do anything myself.

Best regards,