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Dear Harold:

Despite our apparently more than infrequent common ground, I enjoyed our phone conversation of a couple weeks ago.

I was sorry about your continuing appraisal of the apparent lack of propriety exhibited by anyone who repeats the circumstances of your "connection" to Mafia figure Willie Weisberg, after they have learned of those circumstances originally volunteered by yourself. As I said, I have always admired your consistent refusal to get involved, i.e. participate, in the self-perpetuating pissing matches of various critics; likewise I generally share your disdain for the gossip mongering and circulation of personal information all too often attendant to such affairs.

As I said, I was not the source of the information about Willie Weisberg that the "correspondent" of yours referred to in their recent letter to you, as mentioned by you in your letter of 5/3/79 to Howard Bray. While I'm sure the circumstances, however distorted, of distant cousin Willie's connections are being circulated by various critics, I did not inform any critic of the Weisberg-Weisberg connection or distant relation, either directly or indirectly.

However, let me again express my own view that the possibility of your having reacted to this subject with a degree of perfectly human hypersensitivity is a possibility that I view as apparent, if not evident.

That a person's willingness (or eagerness) to receive and/or transmit idle gossip is inversely proportionate to the degree to which they may be the subject of said gossip is, I think, another credible (and perfectly human) possibility. Whether there is a cause/effect element involved there, I don't know.

In our conversation you stated that your abhorrence of the transmission or circulation of personal information relating to the activities of various critics has been the reason why you have discussed (and thereby passed on) such information "very, very rarely." After our conversation ended, however, two seeming exceptions belatedly came to my mind; one of which had occurred during that very conversation.

Without wanting to beat a dead horse, belaboring this whole subject, let me briefly mention the two examples:

1) In your 11/6/78 letter to Howard, you wrote disparagingly about Dan Moldea's "partial apprenticeship" with "the NBC project" and "the partisan who ran it." Now maybe I have misread or misunderstood your less-than-clear wording (which I am pleased you admit is not an altogether rare occurrence) but I took that to mean you were referring to Walter Sheridan and his involvement in helping to expose Garrison's various abominations. You refer later in the letter to "Moldea's superior on the NBC project" and something about Moldea's "intended protection of Walter Sheridan and his then associates."

Here you are apparently distorting or enlarging "connections" where they do not fully exist; one of the things you repeatedly denounced during our conversation. The facts are as follows: While Dan Moldea did in fact once work on an NBC project, he has never worked for Walter Sheridan. (Note: Moldea was 16 or 17 years old at the time Sheridan exposed the Jolly Green Giant). While Moldea naturally interviewed and consulted with Hoffa-expert Sheridan during the preparation of "The Hoffa Wars" and believes him to be an extraordinary public servant (a belief I strongly share) he has not ever worked for him in an NBC project or any other undertaking. Where you get this particular notion or connection I don't know.

While one might suggest that this was only perhaps a case of accidentally exaggerating an "association," I'm sure you recognize that many - in fact most - of the critics would draw some kind of nefarious conclusion about Moldea from your error; in light of the fact that a majority (and in my view, an unfortunately non-Silent Majority) of the critics ignorantly and vociferously attribute sinister motives to Sheridan for helping expose and sink their 1967 Louisiana hero.

2) During our recent conversation, in response to my question as to whether you intended to break your quasi-traditional refusal to read the various JFK case books when the much-touted Lifton thing comes out, you'll recall that you volunteered various remarks. While I almost categorically concur with your sentiments and evaluation, it was you who spontaneously castigated the writer in question as having "a sick mind," as well as being "totally amoral" and "a very sick man." (I believe these quoted phrases are verbatim). In any event - despite the private context of our phone conversation - was this not the transmission of personal (in fact personally derogatory) information and "idle gossip" about a fellow critic? While I agree with your thoughts (and would express my own such thoughts to anyone who cared to discuss the critic in question), doesn't this specific example pass over that line that you yourself have angrily drawn as the line of acceptable discussion or behavior?

Although I have never particularly liked the old expression about "it depends upon who's ox is being gored," perhaps it does have some relation to human actions and emotion. In any event, I would much prefer (if it is really relevant) to have anyone draw inferences (or conclusions) about me from the criminal ways of my distant cousin than from my alleged (but nonexistent) employment by a purportedly sinister "superior," or what someone labels as my "totally amoral" and "very sick" mind.

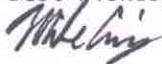
I know you will go on maintaining your present views, and I mine. But I do hope you will at least consider the possibility that I called to simply present another side of the story, however flawed it may or may not be; not to try "to justify the unjustifiable" as you said.

But enough of that. I would also like to ask your help in obtaining a copy of a transcript; one you hopefully will have, and which I really need. I forgot to xerox a copy at the Committee before we locked our files up at the Archives for fifty years, and I haven't found a critic who has a copy. What I'd like is, ironically, a transcript of the 1967 NBC special report on the Garrison investigation. Neither Ferrell or Fensterwald, Hoch or the AIB can find a copy of it, and Sheridan's only copy is stored at the Kennedy Library somewhere amid his files.

So, if you have a copy I would very much appreciate it if you could send me a copy. I know it may be a pain to dig back into that section of your files, but I would be very grateful if you can locate it. I know the time involved in doing a favor like this can finally run into several hours, and I would be happy to reimburse you for whatever such costs you think appropriate. I know your time is valuable.

In the alternative, if you don't have a copy and can suggest someone who does, I'd very much appreciate that also. In any event, I look forward to hearing from you, and am sorry if I have sounded overly contentious. I probably have.

Best wishes,



Mike Ewing