

Dear Jimmy,

11/26/74

With Bud away again Jim is on his own, with a close deadline and too much to do. If he hasn't yet he will when he can send you a copy of the new book. He can't take time for anything on it, I'm doing what I can find time for, which isn't nearly enough, and at the same time trying to prepare anything and everything for which he may have had either immediately or in rebuttal or in the future. You know some of my thoughts for the future and they may become much more important in the near future.

AP carried a long story on the new book last weekend. UPI is going to carry one. If you see any use, I'd appreciate copies. Jim and I make copies for each other and he is too busy to fool with anything like that now.

It is one of several fairly definitive answers to Henry's fakes. I have to find time for the other.

To update me Jim sent me copies of your excellent letters of the 18th and 22nd. I've read them and will later write more about some aspects. The ideas are fine but there remains an area in which because you are limited to your own experiences you have vision that is too narrow. However, no problem. Nor conflict of any kind.

You asked about the proposed interview twice. I'll address that in a limited way. There will be time for more in the future. And there is no basic change in what I mentioned to you. This includes my and Jim's presence at the time and the right to take out anything that with hindsight seems to hold such possibilities as misinterpretation. Because I had been kept in the dark until I was approached in Memphis, which was before I had a chance to talk to you about it, I was caught by surprise. But I then said I would oppose anything other than what you are familiar with through Paul and Snyder. You may not have seen any benefit from those two, but there was. They agreed to this. There was no time to discuss it with anyone other than Jim, which I did several times (we had connecting rooms), in part because Bud manages to enjoy life wherever he is. However, he found a few minutes before lunch on the 15th. I did discuss it with him then, he asked for more information for which I wrote that night before I went to bed and before there was time for response there was the letter of which you know. I can't explain it, particularly because what was in mind was appearance in perhaps May, when most if not all of what you read would have been irrelevant.

After you testified they asked if the repetition of a little of that testimony, which was not reported in the papers, could be included. My response was that it would have to be limited to that -nothing new- that the questions would have to be approved in advance and so would the answers, again to avoid any misinterpretation of any kind. This also was agreed to. In fact, it was even agreed that we would get the tapes.

You know from the past that if I saw any possibility of impropriety I would have nothing to do with it. I see none and the basic change to the agreed-to formula was mine. And anyone who wants to go to the trouble can have your testimony. The press did buy a transcript of the first afternoon that we have. Perhaps more. I don't know. In any event it is all public domain anyway. So it also presents no problem, or, again no problem.

There are some advantages some of which I'll go into. In Washington, to take one example, that would reach more than five times the number of people who read both Time and Newsweek. Including members of Congress, who buy their publications in Washington. An enormous number of influential minds would be reached with a message they should have. Particularly after the free-wheeling and unanswered campaign by the other side, which is continuing even if you see none of it. It gets back to me. It can be poisonous and did have its influence in the recent hearing perhaps without your recognizing it.

You now happen to be the only man in the world who has lived as you have lived for so many years. That is by any standard a legitimate fact and has its own worth and uses. You see this with the precedent in discovery and John. Give it broad application and you'll see many worthwhile side benefits not necessarily excluding you.

The way these things usually work is that the write is paid. Sometimes there is a payment to the interviewee. In this case I think there would be but there has been no such discussion. What I think is of more importance is not certain but is possible, the means of attracting the interest of a non-profit foundation to which there can be no taint at all. I am not the writer so the payment will not be to me.

However, it is understood that Jim and I would not have to pay our own expenses to be present. Also understood that it can't be considered until all the presently needed papers, including rebuttal, are filed. And the reason I stipulated both Jim and me is because we would each be sensitive to different aspects, thus further assuring no impropriety. This is also the desire of the other party that prior to the recent letter had been affirmed as a condition by their counsel. They also want no kickback.

The project envisions no personal publicity for anyone in this interview and that you will not be portrayed as some kind of phony hero. It is to be entirely matter-of-fact. I think you know that otherwise I'd not have been in any way involved and that Jim also would not have given it a second thought. However, there is someone who is involved in an executive capacity who has a known interest in conditions in jails and of prisoners.

Frankly, I think it should proceed as soon as possible and not delayed until May appearance. Harry, for example, will not be silent for half a year. I remember as another example how John was setup and came close to being killed.

Also, I am looking ahead and I am trying to anticipate what can be some very serious problems that in some ways have already manifested themselves without your awareness. Some things that should have been done and were both possible and important could not be. You have recently mentioned one and Jim has, we both think, figured out a way to make it up. When these situations have come up in the past and it was important enough it has been possible for me to address them. I have already discussed what I'll try in this instance/ with Jim.

In any event, there is and there will be the need to look ahead and to try to be prepared for what can be expected. I do expect some developments I'd prefer not to. In this sense this project can be important. It is, I think, in and of itself, for you and in general.

Please continue to let us know whether any correspondence from any of us if opened out of your presence and if it is opened in your presence if it is read.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg