

October 2, 1966

Dear John,

I am in accord with Dell doing a paperback edition of WHITEWASH. I will not accept their verbal terms. I will bind myself to enter into no negotiations with anyone else for such an edition for a reasonable length of time until the disagreements can be worked out. I will also want to examine the "fine print" with care and, as you know, to seek the advice of others on this.

Their offer seems like a startling thing to you and too good to reject. It is not. It is all their way and calculated to give them too good a deal and other benefits that bestow no benefits upon me. It represents no benefit to me to hurt Lane, Holt or Fawcett. I have no objection to Dell achieving a competitive advantage over Fawcett, but I am not willing to have this at my expense.

I have checked the offer I turned down from Fawcett. This was in June, before the field developed as it has, before WHITEWASH demonstrated its strength. Recall, that with all its puffs, reviews and promotion and advertising, INQUEST bombed out with no other competition. WHITEWASH is tough and durable because it is the best and the most complete book. Neither it nor I are mendicants. We have less to fear of competition than any other book. With the sales of Lane's book reportedly skyrocketing and when I had abandoned any public relations work for writing the sequel, during a period of time he was on coast-to-coast and international TV and well reported in the papers and pushed by advertising, in four weeks WHITEWASH sold enough copies to return me the royalties on 142,000 sales under the Dell offer. Fawcett did offer 10% on the first 150,000, with advance, and I did reject it, when I was broke and the sales of WHITEWASH were quite small.

Premature release of the knowledge Dell has the paperback rights could cost me the royalties, or the equivalent of the royalties on another 150,000 overnight, for I today make not less than \$2.00 on each copy sold and the book is selling well.

For this subject and especially for this book, this is not a panic market. We are in the strong position. There is a perhaps vengeful phrase I have heard attributed to Jewish ~~ixix~~ literary agents, the corrolary of "Jew them down". It is "Christian them up". This is the function of an agent, to get the publisher to offer what he should, what the property is worth, not what he thinks he can steal it for. I cannot conceive of Fawcett offering 10% on 150,000 copies if Dell cannot offer 10% on 300,000 copies. Index, schminindex, John, it is talk and nothing else. They can make an even better offer and I have heard of them. Nor can I imagine Fawcett being able to ^{advance} offer the royalty on the first printing as an advance when Dell cannot. There are automatic benefits now given to Dell that Fawcett did not have.

Bentam has taken over a bomb and made a first printing of 300,000 copies. The figure is neither sensational nor sufficient for either Dell's purposes nor mine. It leads me to believe they really intend to cheap through on this, and that I will not have. There are certain very valuable rights I lose as soon as I sign with Dell that I will not throw away. And I see no greater market for a paperback edition the first of November that I see, let us say, the first of January. The difference to me is represented by what at just the present rate of sale is equal to the royalty on the entire first printing of the proposed Dell edition. The first of January I believe I can still make as good a deal as Dell is offering. If I give this up, it is a benefit for which they are giving me nothing. I see no reason to doxththis. I have no fear of the Lane book in paper, and I have met its competition in hardback. But on the first of January there will be the Manchester book, and mine alone, even without the sequel, which will ruin it, is the one that can on content stand against it. Why else do you think Holt, with a growing best-seller on their hands has agreed

to the Fawcett deal which will beginning now cut into their sales. The weaknesses of their book are not in mine.

There are other factors Dell may or may not be aware of. There are many political considerations here involved and they present certain very attractive and potentially very valuable prospects. I have already had feelers on them. The minute I sign with Dell I lose this, too. I am willing to, but not for nothing in return.

Publishers sometimes do what mere mortals might consider foolish things, but they do them and seemingly profit from them. Bennet Cerf told Truman Capote, according to reports, that NAL would pay \$500,000 for the paperback rights to IN COLD BLOOD. They did. I do not see how the book can return this investment. There are, therefore, other publishers' benefits. I believe what WHITEWASH can and will do to Fawcett's book is one of these advantages for Dell. There is no reason for me to give this to them for nothing. Another is the unique history and character of WHITEWASH. That they can get from no other book, nor can they from any other get what it has done and what it will be worth when this whole thing is finally washed out. True, the sale of their book gives me something for this in return, but not enough. Can you imagine what will happen on a second round when there is another official investigation and this is the book that brought out the information that caused it, the only book that demanded such an investigation and set forth its need and the proof thereof.

Even the figure of a million copies means nothing. It startles us until we think about it. As things are now going, I'll make half of that royalty under their present offer before the Lane paperback is out, perhaps more. If you suggest there is a chance sales will fall, I'd have to agree. But I also want to point out that it is my book that will now be getting the increasing attention, proportionately, not the competition. As you know, there is a three-hour TV special that will be aired nationally, with a big advertising and pr campaign, about six weeks from now. I did this, as you also know. Why should I throw it away. And why should I ignore its

probable immediate cash returns for nothing in return?

I fully expect to be the one who stands against Manchester and I fully expect to profit from it. Manchester will have to be a lot tougher than many other rough characters for me to have any fear. You have an idea of who I have met and overcome. There is also pending the private "Warren Commission" investigation by a Commission of prominent citizens and possibly intellectuals. I have already been selected to be its chief investigation. Need I say what this also will do to the present WHITEWASH? Again, it is a benefit I am unwilling to give Dell for nothing.

Just the probably big sale of WHITEWASH is a benefit to them in the business world of today. I am happy for them to have it, but not free.

What happens on this subject when there is attention to a book or an author is fantastic. The week after my appearance on the Burke show I sold ^{Trade} more than 3500 copies (meaning more than \$7,000 dollars for that week's income ^{here} alone). The following week's performance was only slightly less. In six weeks I'll have similar attention, but not just in New York. Washington and Los Angeles are already taking the program, and other major cities are expected to. The producers expect international syndication of the show.

A year ago in June Feltrinelli refused to even read the book, despite the strong recommendation of his agent that he consider it for Italian publication. A month ago Feltrinelli told his agent to seek me out. They have made me an offer that I have rejected. I now have, without solicitation, six feelers from Italy, three of them embodied in firm offers. My book and I are the features in the Italian press today, not Lane's. I cite this merely as an example of how I am surviving the competition where INQUEST could not. I have that kind of a book and have imparted to it that kind of character, drama and emotion. No other book in this field can have it. It is worth something.

What this all adds up to is that Dell is making me at best an inferior offer. It is not at all that I do not want to do business with them. It is to my advantage

to do business with a good merchandizer. From my limited knowledge of the field, there is only one I consider better, at most two. They are at best offering me only what Bantam gave for a book that failed. That is too little.

Whether or not they do WHITEWASH II it is coming out, and soon. It will materially increase the sale of WHITEWASH. This ~~is~~ is something I have to consider as an additional plus on my side and something that represents an unpaid benefit to Dell. The week after the Burke show I sold 200 copies from here, by mail. That brought me about \$1,000 over and above what was sold in normal channels. When I sell a book at retail now I make \$4.50. When I sell one to a bookstore, I make not less than \$2.50. I mailed out 67 yesterday. Yesterday's business was 70 copies, two of which went out before the mail came and one of which didn't get mailed yet. It is a better day than average lately, without the publicity, but it still represents more than I will net on the sale of 2,000 copies under the Dell offer, and this is over and above what the book is doing in commercial channels.

Should Dell refuse to improve their offer, I think I have lost nothing and will in the long run be better off for many reasons. I have had other offers since I declined Fawcett's and I did nothing to encourage them. As you know, I have not even called back on any of them. Perhaps unwisely or foolishly I believe I have a valuable property. I am satisfied it is worth more than Dell is offering.

I am also not satisfied with the interval period and what Dell is offering for that, if anything. With the kind of distribution they can give the present book, the possibilities for profit are great. Remember, my last four week's sales were in the face of the trade knowledge of the paperback INQUEST and Popkin's book, both well advertised, and in consequence of not a single ad and no new pr effort on my part. This is what WHITEWASH is and does. With a normal book and on an ordinary subject one could conclude the time for such performances is short. In this case, I believe to the contrary. A president does not get killed every day. The subject will heat up, especially as the election gets closer and the "crisis in credibility"

sharpens. There is also a future for this book that those in the normal book trade would not anticipate. It has an importance in the coming presidential election that few people have given thought to (but some have, for I have heard from them).

Again, none of this means I do not want Dell to do it in paperback. What it means, simply, is that their present offer, as I understand it, is not acceptable. There is no reason for them, from my point of view, to throw away the great profit that is now available on a per unit basis or the large number of sales that can now be made on this basis. It is to their benefit to beat Fawcett over the head, not mine. If they really wanted to, they could make as much with this book between now ~~then~~ and the first of the year ~~as with the entire projected first~~ printing and probably more. They certainly can make much more than that for me. The bulk of the paperback market would still remain. In the course of doing this with the book, they actually make it more attractive when it comes out in paperback. This is the part of which I have heard little and nothing that is good. It is not within their experience, not the kind of thing they do or have done and perhaps they fear it. I can understand that, but I do not propose to lose anything for it.

Other things are pending that I will not go into for this letter is already too long. I will tell you about some.

There are some things I will not negotiate except for real money. One of these is anything like a November 1 publication date. Another is anything like an immediate announcement of the paperback book, even in "leaks", for that can kill the present and very profitable sale. If they are willing to pay me for what I will lose, there will be no problem.

I will make no deal that is not better than both Lanes and Epstein's, and they may not be squalling the offer for Epstein's failure. Unless they are willing to make such an offer and make something of the fact that they have made this kind of an offer, they are not prepared to do with the book what I want done with it. With no increase in what is now pending for my public relations, what is now arranged,

in fact, with a decrease in sales, I will still do at least as well by the first of the year in net income as the sale of their entire first printing will yield me. Perhaps this is no consideration for them, but it is for me. I have every reason to expect improvement, not the opposite, in the coming three months. That is what is happening to the subject and the past months were the year's poorest in books.

I will not make a deal that does not include a large advance. You know the reasons. I am not convinced that a 300,000 first printing means anything in the paperback business and on this subject. Bantam did that with the book that failed and was being remaindered in less than three months. In short, I want the big thing they say they are going to do with it to be in the contract, not their sales pitch to you. That now remains as what they can do with it in the cheap, without return to me. I want it as the beginning point, not the end they can achieve for nothing. This book will sell the maximum they held forth to you with no effort on their part. I want the maximum effort in the contract and a reflection of it in what I get.

If they are unwilling to do this, then their offer is inferior to that of Fawcett, and that I rejected when my position was worse.

You will soon be here and there are other things we will discuss. I hope Lil can have some figures prepared in the short interval, for you and for their consideration. I hope you will find time to ponder what is best for me, for that is what is also best for you. If I may so suggest, discussing this with your father might be worthwhile, for nothing replaces experience as a guide. My experience in this field has been short, but it is that and my longer experience in life on which I am drawing in this letter. Dell is taking advantage of your lack of experience, or trying to.

Above all, do not let yourself be entrapped with their speed pitch. It is calculated to precipitate us into something to their benefit, not ours.

Sincerely,