

Dear Dick,

1/16/77

I am disappointed not to have heard from you about The King Conspiracies.

Unlike most authors I have some publishing and marketing experience and I knew the commercial potential is very real - and that it is new. That Zebra does not know this I cannot believe. I do understand their interest in a bullsh*t book they can sell as they did McDonald's fabrication. Most publishers prefer crap on the political assassinations. Most avoid solid works that are critical of government. As one example there has been no single real Watergate expose. I have offered to let them know what the rest of the book will say without response. It does not seem necessary for decision to require all this time. I'd appreciate it if you'd force an answer, yes or no, now. If they say no there should be other real possibilities on this subject.

Separate from the subject is what is uniquely mine in this work, what the crooks who infest the field cannot steal. It is all quite merchandisable. More with what I have done in court on this. Not even in my own prior work is there the amount of once-secret evidence. Of this much more than can be used is suitable from dramatic facsimile reproduction in the text as a substitute for quotation. I'm talking about the kind of stuff that people never see and few know exists. Believe me I am talking about the book that can crack one of the major crimes in our history and with it be the most definitive expose yet of the FBI. It, today, is a separate hot topic.

The House committee has already taken another tack, one not easily turned from if they ever feel the direction of the wind. They have assumed Ray is the assassin in a conspiracy. Looking at it this way we are talking about a book that will wreck a Congressional investigation and make it turn around.

Here I digress for something you should know about them. I broke off with them and told Sprague, chief counsel and staff director, that I would have nothing to do with them as long as he remained with the committee and one Robert Ozer remained on its staff. I made out a case against Ozer, whose conduct was very bad in the worst prosecutorial way and who was authoritarian. He had been the top man on the King case. Quietly he has departed. Sprague's own position is not good now. His departure will not surprise me. His problems stem from three things two of which begin with me. The other is something I warned him against last October.

To a degree they have begun to turn on the lowest level. They are using Frame-Up as their text. Their cops are reading the book. They have bought every copy in Washington. They would have come here for them had it not been for the storm. (We are snowed in except by feet.) This is the other side - that their work comes from my work, which will sell a book. Unless they stop entirely their investigation will be based on the third part of The King Conspiracies. So on this aspect, before there can be any investigation, leave alone an official report, there is a book that does it all. That certainly can be sold.

I have just finished going through about 5,000 individual items of sensationally unprecedented character. My notes alone are about 7,500 words on this stuff alone. By the time you have this I'll have another thousand pages. They await me, already copied for me. The storm alone accounts for my not working on them at this minute. They will be put on a non-stop Greyhound bus tomorrow and if I cannot get out to meet it I will have a friend awaiting it for me. I mean these are from Clarence Kelley's hot little hands to me, covered by about a dozen letters the last of which came only yesterday.

I was right not to put this third part on paper without a contract. I would have had too much to rewrite. At the same time I think I am not at the point of diminishing returns on this stuff. I say this from what I knew of the FBI's MO in political cases. There will be more of significance but later. I'd rather not discuss this by phone. I do wish it were possible for us to spend some time talking about it.

If I had my druthers I would opt for a hardback and what most publishers never consider, an instant hardback, promoted with all the hot-breath excitement of a news story, like the Extra editions of pre-electronic reporting. With apologies to the reviewers but we just can't hold this - the Congress has to have it. There is no exaggeration in this. A hardback would have a long life even with reprint. I am confident of use as college texts despite the popular approach.

This gets to one of my real disappointments in all this work, that no commercial publisher could see the commercial possibilities in a subject that would not die in his lifetime. The alternative is that no publisher had the courage. From this and your current experience I hope you can see what about 1967 or 1968 I had to recast my role and consider that my major responsibility is to get the work done and then on paper, regardless of how it came out, and then go on to other work and get it on paper, too.

In most cases fear is the reality. ^{what} ~~some~~ it is accompanied by shame.

The residual interest is there and will be there. Just yesterday the University of Oregon asked for all my papers. Rather I received the letter yesterday, from the librarian in charge of their acquisitions and archives. (Here I am, without a degree, and they want it for advanced scholarship, restricted to graduate use. I had to tell them I've promised it to Wisconsin unless there is an offer that includes helping me now. But I have a doctoral thesis going based on one little part of my work that I think will make a good book.) After the normal commercial life this book will be used in black studies programs in many schools.

The situation is forcing me to ^{consider} ~~think~~ ^{what} ~~hate~~ to have to think about, what I can do with all this work if I have no publisher, no meaningful contract. I hate to take time from the work but I can't waste the work, either.

Can you imagine what work when I have more than two file cabinets of once-secret official records I've not had time to read? They are coming in at a rate of more than 500 pages a week from one agency only and another has begun to process what has to be an enormity for me from the estimated search fee of \$1,000 of which I've had to pay half.

I've had an approach from New Times. They want to do a piece a week. Ansen phoned me. He has to be hard up for this. He should be back to me before too long. My proposal was that they take what they want from my work and write it themselves, that we take it on an item-by-item basis, some at their regular rate some to be negotiated because I believe they are worth more. This related to JFK. I'll have to see how it goes but I may have to wind up offering a package. The initial offer can solve my regular financial problem, how to pay the costs of these acquisitions. Last year it came to about \$100 a week and I had no regular income. I was lucky to receive a few gifts and speaking engagements. This is what paid the costs. That account now is about empty. By the time it is I'll have to be in a position to continue paying.

As long as we have this kind of weather I'll not be leaving home except for short errands. I may be able to get the lane clear of snow. If I do not I will be home. However, when I leave, and I should get to Washington this week, I am generally home for supper. It is safe to call about 8 p.m. I will not go into all the specifics I'd like to by phone. This is not paranoia. Little by little I'm getting the stuff on me from the speckeries. They were going through my garbage as early as 1940. They've had two kinds of mail cover of which I have their proof. I have had accounts of the transcripts of my conversations from these who have seen them and obviously have to be protected.

Best,