

Mr. Howard Bray
Fund for Investigative Journalism
1346 Connecticut Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20036

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Dear Howard,

Not only did our letters cross - our thoughts did. By now you know that I also wrote you about an agent. I do need one, want one, and do not want all the work attached to being my own publisher. I have always preferred conventional publishing. There is not one of my books with which I did not make a real effort, the one I'm about to reprint.

Especially with the exposures of the FBI and CIA I hope there is a change in publishers' attitude. With the appointment of the new House committee there should also be more commercial attractiveness to the subject. These should make an agent more willing than I have experienced in the past.

However, neither an agent nor I can immediately escape this past. It shows and it will not change easily. Toward the end of 1967, when I was unpublishable despite a best-seller, I began to rethink and recast my role. I resigned myself to being the one who if I did no more would undertake to make and leave as complete a record as possible. This required that my writing be a substitute for the workings of the judicial system, leading to what others regard as prolixity. While the rough draft of my first book is what I eventually published it was the runner-up for the Mystery Writers' award of 1966. I do not think that would be true of the first couple of manuscripts I would now complete.

This will, I think, require patience and understanding of an agent and an investment in editing by a publisher. With decent editing and not having to worry about that I am certain I can deliver what can have as a minimum considerable commercial ~~value~~ value. Let me undertake to try and sell this idea. I do want an agent and I do not want to have to be a publisher in addition to all the other things I am.

I have a new book on the King assassination in rough draft, except for part of a chapter, to the point where I require what I am suing the Department of Justice to get. I believe that in what I have written there are two good movie possibilities, for one so good that I have a summary registered with the Writers Guild in Hollywood. In fact I have three such ideas registered there. I did put the book together with this in mind. With an assurance of publication I could complete the draft fairly rapidly. I would, with the new evidence I have, without regard to what I will yet get. It is enough, with the attention a decent publisher's effort would achieve today, to break the King assassination open well before the new investigation has the chance except through me as a witness. As I told you last week, I think, I'm to spend tomorrow with the chief counsel and his two assistant chief counsel in charge of each aspect of the investigation.

I have a tentative title for this book, The King Conspiracies.

The rough draft is retyped but unread. There was no time for editing of the draft but I did get it retyped so it can be read. I can summarize the final third of the book and I can show the secret FBI files I now have for it. The book is structured so I can add to the end, so that ~~at~~ ^{up} the last minute it will not have to be done over.

Once I have this done I have other work to which I can return and want to very much. One is Agent Oswald. An agent and publisher will find that I have done most of the basic work in both assassinations. Some years ago I did about five chapters of Agent Oswald when I had to lay it aside because there was no publisher interest. However, the years have persuaded me that it, too, is correctly structured. With the new materials I have from both the FBI and CIA I could complete this draft without great difficulty. I spent much time in original investigation for it, with some success. I do have some exciting secret records for it, some pretty Byzantine, like the secret record of the secret destruction of evidence in the White House.

There is more already researched and there will be attention because of the changed situation in which the subject is no longer taboo and from some of my litigation. Jim will be filing some pretty large suits soon. One will be against all the federal spooks, for whom I was a fairly large-sized project. I have some of their files on me and in time will have more.

Going along with the character of my work and the fact that I've done virtually all of the original work are unique dust-jacket credentials. The Department of Justice has certified to a federal court that I know more about the events and the FBI's investigation of the JFK assassination than anyone in the FBI. The federal court of appeals has ruled in a 7/7/76 decision that the suppressed evidence I seek serves "the interest of the nation." It then directed that the suit for it proceed with speed. I've used the Freedom of Information Act more than any ^{other} private citizen. One of my suits is the first of four cited in the debates as requiring the 1974 amendments of that Act.

I have a substantial following. None of my books has failed. Yet I've been able to advertise none and my promotions are all without any budget. I recovered the costs of my fourth book by direct sales without leaving home a single time and with the expenditure of only a small sum for a direct mailing. This took two months, without even a mention in Publishers' Weekly. It held one press conference at a cost of \$75 and made front-page news of that book. In competition with the Mayaguez incident, too. By traditional news standards my work does have this news value.

What I am saying is that I believe I take something unusual to a publisher in return for a publisher's effort to make a success of my work. With the change in attitudes it seems to me that the chances of commercial success are quite good with a good editor much of whose work can be with a blue pencil.

As long as the editing is faithful to the work and does not impose an artificial doctrine on it I'd be happy not to have to look at the editing and to spend that time on other ~~my~~ writing. This may be unreal but I'm telling you how I do feel. I do not have the kind of egot that would have me fighting over words.

It probably is not easy to comprehend how much work I have done. My published work is a small fraction of the total. As a result I believe I am loaded with potentially valuable literary properties I do not want to write myself. With these I believe I can represent a real value to an agent who represents competent writers not already overloaded with their own interests. There can easily be movie potential in some of this.

You conclude with "let me know if I can do anything." Now that you have seen for yourself that I have only one head and that it is screwed on the right way perhaps you can undertake to explain to an agent that while I have become rather offbeat from the kind of life I've led for 13 intensive years that I am neither a nut nor unreasonable. Most of the people well known in the fields in which I work are nuts. Of all the writing there is substantial, worthwhile writing by two others only. Sylvia ^Wagher and Howard Roffman. The rest at their ethical best are ripoff artists, plagiarists and whores. It is from them that I have a reputation of being hard to get along with. If Mark Lane, for example, does not believe and say this he can't live with himself. If Bud Fensterwald does not he has to face his ^{own} record and he cannot. And all the times I've saved his ass, including within the past month. Those who have worked with me, like Jim ^Wesar, Roffman and Les Payne of ^Newsday will, I think, say other than the Lanes and Fensterwalds do. Howard will say that I turned the appendixes of my last two books over to him for him to select and footnote as he saw fit. Jim will say that no matter how much I disagree with what he does in court he has carte blanche to do as he sees fit and there are never recriminations. Les can say that when he interviewed six people I suggested he came out with two major stories from those six people only, all productive and all total strangers to him. Only the irrationals and those who have to hate me because they steal from me give me the reputation I do not discourage because it saves me much time.

I think perhaps this kind of introduction may be what can be most helpful to me now. I would like to have an agent very much. It will be much easier if the agent can begin by understanding me and willing to consider that it can have commercial value.

If this presents any kind of problem to you please let me know and I'll undertake my own introduction.

You are also ~~writing~~ correct in the opinion that now is the time to move my books. I can do nothing to this end and do not. The sales I have are spontaneous. I would go farther and be willing to jeopardize these sales that ~~me~~ manage to keep me going. I think this is a good time for a popularization-condensation of all six JFK books. I have not spoken to him but I have a witer in mind. I think there could be a good market for a condensation paperback reprint of Frame-Up, the only work not in accord with the ~~official~~ official solution of the King assassination. This is the book that really reopened that case.

Thanks for your interest and your willingness.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg