

Ms. Raphaela Seroy, managing editor
Richard Callen & Co.
260 Fifth Ave.,
New York, NY 10001

5/10/94

Dear Raphaela,

Last Friday, March 4, just as we were leaving to do what had accumulated and had to be done because the snow and ice had confided us so much, the author's set of page proofs were delivered. With them was your letter saying C & G had to have them by yesterday, the 9th. Not dreaming of the disaster those proofs represent but wanting to return the proofs as rapidly as possible, I went to work on them Saturday, and Sunday finished a thoroughly disgusting, emotionally draining a job. As my accompanying letter said, corrections that simply had to be made and were made by me, Corrections of what should not have been done to begin with, I did pick up. When I realized that as it stood this was entirely without conclusions, I wrote you a hasty note and told you I would send them immediately. I did that, too, and you had that before your deadline. I let everything else go. By your schedule in your letter I had one working day and an hour or two on the next day if I were to get the corrected proofs back by overnight UPS, the only way I could get them back by the time you stipulated. I think that little time is incredible, given all the time there had been. I turned part of the ms. in last September, the rest in October, and then sent a few additions because I had written in such haste.

To get this done I worked the weekend, taking time only for the briefest skimming of the morning paper. Besides, having had no advance notice-something I have yet to get from any of you on anything at all - I had medical needs I started to meet before daylight on Monday. They ended when I was home from an hour and a half in the dentist's chair for part of a root-canal job. (Not bad, I dozed off a couple of time and was awakened by my loud snores and the dentist's laughing.) I was hardly home when Diana phoned to say the proofs had to be returned immediately. That means that if I had not spent the weekend on them I'd have had to return them unread. This is the way publishers work? The way authors are treated, the way responsible books come out?

We made the copies and drove into town to send them and you had them Tuesday morning, the eighth.

At no point and in no way was I responsible for any delay. *On anything!*

The spectacularly incompetent ^{ru-} typed copy was sent me by Richard on January 20. I made the great amount of corrections required and sent them as soon as possible. My letter is undated, alas, but I have a letter from Richard that I believe was sent after he got them, dated February 2.

And then, with so minuscule a book, I am not sent proofs until a month and a day after Richard's letter and then given virtually no time to read and correct them! No

time at all, as it turned out from Diana's call if I had not spent the weekend of them!

And if I understand your letter 'correctly and take from it what you do not say but I think your letter clearly means, I wasted all that time as I also wasted most of the time correcting what a high school kid of reasonable intelligence would not have had in the copy to begin with. And that I did correct!

Three or four different styles on direct quotations, quite a few of them.

When the copy I sent was in the correct style and needed no changes and was in fact almost entirely in the form of xeroxes. That someone up there decided to play childish games with. Like decided that paragraphs are not for a book and, even in direct quotation, when it was clearly to be verbatim, using dashed instead, adding that for paragraphing in such things as the official transcript of an official proceeding!

This was done in the copy I got under date of January 20 so wretchedly badly that it is in some instances impossible for the reader to know whether lengthy passages are my writing or what I quote!

And that, too, was corrected in what I returned ^(pt) and you had a month or more before you sent me the proofs. Only someone up there decided that most of the corrections I made in the copy should not be made, including that one ^{meaning} and most of them on these quotations. Someone's love of dashes that did not exist in verbatim reproduction just had to stay in! And from your letter I take it remains in what is to be printed!

My manuscript does have conclusions. When the proofs sent me just poop out, with no conclusions and with much of the point of the entire book already cut out for no comprehensible reason at all, I did rush a short conclusion. You now tell me that it "is too late to put in a 'conclusion' ...but the consensus of opinion from C & G sales is that as it stands, it is an enticing comeback in any event."

Whatever you mean by "comeback" what you say is entirely irrelevant to the absolute need of a work of nonfiction to state conclusions. It is my reputation you people are ruining by portraying me as so incompetent that I do a book and just let it drop dead without concluding. There is no "continued next week" in books!

Raphaella, I began writing more than 60 years ago. More than 60 years ago I edited the high school paper that took an "All-America Honor Rating" at the Columbia School of Journalism annual competition for high school papers. I spent years editing and publishing Senate hearings and reports. And now I am made to appear to be a fool, an amateur, an incompetent and perhaps worse because of what you people have done that ought not in any event have been done and then with this incredible deadline that precludes any of the corrections in proofs to which authors are entitled!

Did any of you stop to ask yourself what I'll be able to say if anyone, particularly in the media, asks me why my book has no conclusions, why did I just let it peter out? What it has so many grossly wrong reproductions of what is supposed to be verbatim, so

many different ^{styles} ~~styles~~ on it when only one is correct? Should I then say my publishers are a bunch of jerks and don't know how to edit and publish books and have typists who cannot follow clear xerox copy of originals quoted? And think books do not need conclusions? *On a table of contents? On an index?*

Or that its sales forces makes the editorial judgements and dictates style?

Raphaella, I published five of my six published books on the JFK assassination, all but one when I was broke and in debt and with no income and with many problems that for many people would be overwhelming and there are no such flaws in any of them. My wife was the equivalent of typesetter and I did all the rest to publish except the covers, the actual printing and shooting the negatives from which to print. And I helped on them, too, and went over them and the blues. Two days on that on the last book 50 miles from home when I was in agony from acute thrombophlebitis and no such error in it or in any of my books. They need not exist, not a single one of them. You up there created all of them. When I corrected them in January they exist in March! *Incredible!!!*

Diana said something I could not understand about the printer's problem but because I was returning the proofs that day I did not ask her to explain what I did not understand. But whatever the printer's problem is, it is not his reputation but mine that is involved in this simply awful situation I did not create, I did correct and with a month to do it those corrections were not made. It is not the printer's reputation that is being damaged, it is mine. And if a little more time is needed, all that need be done is delay the book's printing the little time required, and then all of this - that I did not cause and you ^(printed) did - can be corrected and I would not be damaged by it. Nor would the book, which can be laughed at the way I last saw those proofs.

You also tell me "There was no time to insert the photos." There was! Plenty! I wrote many times about them, without a single response. When I learned that the Archives was moving all its JFK stuff and could not then make copies, and that was long ago, I wrote, without even acknowledgement, that these could be made from the ~~printed~~ ^{printed} Commission page, as I had done, with an offset camera that would remove the photoengraver's dots. I could have had that done here if you could not have up there. And those photos ^{and dramatic} are perhaps the most important exhibits for what you describe with what I regard as a buzz word to replace the earlier ~~buzz~~ buzz word, now "legal argument," last September "~~Lawyer's brief.~~"

In either formulation I put the book together that way. It needed nothing at all to be that! Richard flattered me no end in writing me, "I think you did a ~~great~~ great job." You would have been a notable lawyer in the Clarence Darrow mold." Of course that pleased me very much, particularly from him with all his lawyer experience!

But what lawyer makes a "argument" or files a "brief" that just drops dead, without stating any conclusions?

And despite the impossible deadline, I picked up in those conclusions what was

most important as either argument or brief and for no perceptible reason at all was eliminated. It was in the manuscript. Not only does that include what is absolutely basic, it is what has the best chance of attracting media interest. And it includes the point of the whole ~~thing~~ ^{that was} in the manuscript and ^{was} edited out. While the conclusions was not the ideal place to have that, it certainly was better than not having it at all!!!!

Raphaella, neither my age nor my impaired health nor my weakness and fragility nor anything else, including weariness delayed my producing the manuscript or correcting the shortened copy sent me or the proofs. If there was any time bind, you people created it after I saw to it that it had no reason to exist.

I made no objections, caused no problems, made no demands, not even when, as I find incredible, I was never informed of anything and never got responses to letters, to questions and to offers ^{of help to the books when published.}

And now, for absolutely no reason at all under normal procedures and none at all if the book is slightly delayed in being printed, I am being made a laughingstock among my peers, portrayed by you, not by me, as an incompetent or worse. ^{Am I an amateur for}

Don't try to tell me about time pressures, either. My third book, which is longer than this one, was four weeks from the day I began it until I had the first hundred copies, with a name-and-subject index and with a sewed binding, which ~~is~~ takes ever so much longer, in my home. And I did the makeup on it, too, what the printer usually does. And at that my printer had to farm the binding out.

I agreed to editing but there was no editing so that took no time. There was merely cutting, by chapter, with most of the chapters totally eliminated and those that remained shifted around without any continuity added. And I did not complain about that, either.

If it requires delaying the book a little I think it should be delayed, the corrections made, the conclusions and the pictures added and that is what I want and ask.

I would like very much to know how ^{this} incredible and very damaging situation came to pass but the record indicates that I'll get no meaningful response, having gotten no responses at all in the past. ^{It is simply astounding, hurtful and very unfair!}

And if this is not ^{no} done, as I want very much for it to be done, I surely would like to know what I am to say to those, particularly in the media, who ask about it. Who up there believes that a non-fiction book without ^{with sincerest regrets,} table of contents or index will be regarded as a serious work? That is what appears to be about to happen!

Harold Weisberg

Harold

The package was ~~damaged~~ when it got here but that is OK. The box used for all that paper was too flimsy. It and the wrapping paper broke and tore but lost no contents. The wrapped package at the top, marked Chapters 1-IV, is in good shape. But I'll not go farther into it until I have a suitable box for it. I now have none of those dimensions that will hold that much paper.

And whenever you get it done will be fine. I appreciate your efforts with it.

There were to have been three sets of the complete original, one for me, one for Wrono at the Univ. of Wisconsin and one for Professor McKnight at local Hood College. He plans to place his set in the library for student use when he gets it.

The damage to the box is of no significance. I merely explain why I can say no more about the contents, if there is ^{anything} to be said about that.

I did not need the return of the original ms. anyway. I have a xerox of it already in separate file folders by chapter.

Mention of placing the retyped ms in the college library reminds me of what you may find interesting or amusing.

A retired Danish businessman who from his letters seems to be a wonderful person asked me years ago if he could translate my work into Danish. I agreed. Several months ago I got from him a package that included a looseleaf-bound set of what he had to then done in the most expensive and elaborate binder of that sort I've ever seen. With it was a Danish to English dictionary. That is in the library. They have students from all over the world, it is a fine school. So, maybe they'll have one from Denmark.

If you do not run off copies ⁱⁿ for the professors, and I presume that to do this with the computers you merely push buttons, I'll have them xeroxed commercially here. Ours is a simple copier in which one places ^{one} sheet at a time and it does not collate. I can use it only ^{only} for short periods of time because I may not stand still so I have to sit on a bar stool with my left leg horizontal on the cabinet in which we store the paper, while I feed the machine sideways. And my wife this time of the year is busy. She is a tax consultant.

And between the two of us, dear "aphacla, next month we will have 163 years.

Best,
Herald