

Mrs. Kathy Weber
108 Beacon Road
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3/8/93

Dear Kathy,

Even allowing for inflation, I think your Charlotte's cookie sales exceed yours.
~~Which~~ ^{Which} also entailed some delivery for your mother?

I'd forgotten that your picture appeared with some of the stories you thoughtfully sent some time ago. Don't go to the trouble of having one made but if you find a picture of Nick I'd like to see it. I was very fond of you and John as children, I'm glad you are doing well and are happy and I'd just like to see what Nick looks like.

Lil and I were both surprised at your description of your father because you do not describe the man we knew and loved. Understand, I'm not disputing you and I'm sure you are honest, the impression I've formed from your letters and your articles.

We are both stunned. I've thought about this and think I'll take a break and go to the nearby mall for a little walking and think about it further. ...I did and my own current major problem intruded some but perhaps I have a partial explanation for you.

What sidetracked me on my own problem was what I remembered when I walked past one of the local Walden bookstores, managed by a friend who was not in. I left the message for her that my book on the King assassination more than 20 years old and the only dependable one still is being reprinted as a quality paperback by Carroll & Graf and to let her know that there will be what the publisher did not arrange for, a natural promotion: I'll be on Unsolved Mysteries on the 31st. On the King assassination.

I, and I think I speak for Lil on this but can't ask her because she has a tax client with her, never saw anything sociopathic in your father. I can't remember his being remote except possibly when there was much on his mind and then it could not have lasted long. I never knew him "full of anger" but did know him to anger easily from time to time, for real cause. I'll return to an aspect of this. "Full of denials" is ambiguous but however I thought of it I do not recall any evidence of it. And that he renounced you and "chose not to know his grandchildren, whom he never met," simply astounds me. I know he loved you and John when you were children and I know he suffered before John's heart operation. I did not see him for some time after it.

He was intolerant in a narrow area, of stupidity and dishonesty or any kind.

We never knew him to be "unknowable" and it is so different from the man we knew that it more than the other things is what triggered the line of thought about which I wanted to think more so I got away from the phone to think about it because I expected a call that did not come from a detective on a sick case I've helped him on.

As best I can now recall, to tell you how I met him, it was through the editor and managing editor of Click magazine, then the third-largest picture magazine, being old LIFE and Look. The day we met I learned he wanted to get into helping the ear effort so I

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invited him to stay with me and then introduced him to the older woman who was a dear friend ^{She} who immediately got him and other friends useful jobs in the government. Like your father, all used that as a base and soon had work more to their liking. And for which they were all very well suited. I skip the ~~sketchy~~ stories about some of them.

I first met your mother when he moved back to New York permanently, the day he did.

Your letter got me to thinking about the changes I observed in him with the years. I now realize that some of the characteristics I do not remember from when we first knew him I began to see in him, to a degree, in 1965 and 1966 when I stayed with you on Faraway Close.

He knew people were taking advantage of him and he let them, in some instances. And then he was angry about it. I met some strange ones in his office at 45th and Fifth and I am certain some of them took advantage of him. I think that some of what I first remember seeing in him then came from a kind of frustration. Part of that was his brilliance and correctness not perceived or understood by those with whom he had business dealings. In fact I think that one of those men stole an idea from me, a cooking idea, and sold it.

(Lil and I were both national cooking champions. She was the national chicken-cooking queen and three years later I was the national barbecue king. I was the Maryland chicken-cooking champion for four to six years. That was when we f armed.)

Aside: I was quite surprised at John's recollection of the long weekend they spent with us on the farm.

I never knew your father to be other than generous, in all ways, and I think that may have contributed to the changes you call to my attention. People took advantage of him and his willingness and generosity.

What I am saying is that in a sense life caused some of the changes in him.

The last time I remember seeing your mother your father was away. It was in the summer of 1966. I'd been invited to do the all-night talk show of a radical right ^Domposity who called himself "Long John" Nebel. He was on WNBC. I was broke in those days so I drove up to New York to get there early and try to do a little to promote my first book, which I'd published myself after more than 100 international rejections. Toward the end of the afternoon I began to tire so I drove out to take a nap, in that pleasant and comfortable third-floor room. But I could not sleep so after a visit with your mother I drove into Manhattan and met a woman friend who did a book-and-author show who wanted to be in the studio during the show. She ^{w/} ^{studio} was the only audience other than the control-room staff. It was only my second talk show, the first big one, but I'd learned on the local people-eater first one for which a restaurateur friend got me slightly drunk in advance to relax me.

It may amuse you if I digress.

Nebel had an impartial panel, both farther to the right extreme than he. One was then Bill Buckley's right hand man on the NY Conservative Party Keirin O'Dougherty, and the other was the very dull stuffed shirt Victor Lasky. I let them abuse me, patiently and

politely, until I thought they'd delivered the audience to me and then I started ridiculing them for their ignorance, proving ignorance, not just alleging it. It got wild! Even the staff did not like them, as I learned. They broke for 15 minutes of news after 2 1/2 hours, and great, old-fashioned, unhealthy and delicious delicatessen and soda pop like I've not seen since, like Dr. Brown's tonic and cream soda, etc. I kept needling the momser Lasky while we munched, and I recall one still clearly. They behaved very badly with me, were overtly trying to ruin my book and me, and without their coarseness and ignorance I did them in! To the point where when after the break when as usual they read telegrams from the audience, all supporting me and criticizing them for their boorishness and bad behavior, during a commercial Nebel went into the control room and when he returned he signed the program off, with about two hours remaining, and had parts of earlier shows played by tape.

He said good night to the political hacks who were his panel but not to me!

As I was putting my book and a few paper in my brief case - that is what I had then, not an attache case- the woman with me, Dottie, signalled to me to come over to see her. She told me to delay my packing, at the request of the staff, until after the others left. I did. She then took me into the control room and Nebel's own staff had packaged up all the pastrami, corned beef, tongue, salami and I can't remember what else, a large grocery-bag of it, with another of the soft drinks, for me to have to eat as I drive home. Which I began to do 24 hours after I'm arisen. First driving Dottie to her home near Fort Hamilton. That was the beginning of the success of the unknown book not in the books stores. As a result it was for a TV repetition I won't take your time for a few weeks later.

I may have seen your father after that when he was in Washington briefly but I have no recollection of it. When I was in New York for promotions I phoned your mother and spoke to her briefly but on none of those occasions was your father home.

After this digression I wonder if what finally killed your father resulted in behavioral and attitudinal changes in him. I've known instances in which it had that effect. This might be more possible if he imagined he had cause for anger or resentment.

If you want a few illustrations of his being ~~high~~ "highly moral" I can supply them. He was. Also highly ethical.

He was an assistant to Walter Wanger, then a top producer, when he was little more than a boy. He left Hollywood because he found it so corrupt. He just did not want to live that way.

My typing can't be any better. I'll let reading and correctinf this wait until tomorrow when I may confabulate less.

I envy you and Nick a good agent. There is the Wordsworthian curse on me of being the first. And in the field in which I work of absolutely solid and accurate work. As Doubleday told me in 1965 when Pocket Books, which had predicted the book would be the best seller of that year, realized they didn't dare publish it, for good reason if you'd like to know, actually asked Doubleday to publish it. *Your father sent me to Pocket. He it new-people every where.*

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So I now have a mamouth manuscript, rough draft ⁺ should say, that a local history professor and also a dear friend told the president of the fine small college where all my work will be a permanent and free public archive in recommending honorary degrees for Ed and me, should "revolutionize thinking about the John Kennedy assassination." The President phoned me a week ago today to tell me that the trustees had "voted unanimously and enthusiastically" to award the degrees. It will be at convocation in August.

He happened to be here yesterday when the Wisconsin historian friend who has retyped the rough draft ^{his} computer called. I have speakerphones ^{so} it was like a conference call. When we were talking about a problem that can interfere with the ~~hope~~ ^{hope} I'd had for publication, and I do ~~not~~ go into that but will if you'd like, but I'm not the problem, I said it is a tough book and they usually have problems. The Wisconsin prof said tough was not the word. It was without historical precedent, an unprecedented book to him as a historian.

And I did it, ~~so~~ ^{so} to speak, the Warren Commission's words, alone and unassisted in about five months. I'll be 80 a month from today and I've been on borrowed time since 1975.

I know it is a solid work, definitive and thoroughly documented, and from my record it can't lose money and with any effort would be a real success. I've actually heard from more than 20,000 strangers. It has never been easy to find me to write me. And many of them say wonderful things. Only last year did I think to make a separate file of some of the nicer ^{of} ones, for archival purposes, because they are all scattered by the letter of the alphabet, how I filed them.

Just this morning I answered a letter from a writer in New Zealand who said, "I feel very privileged to have this correspondence with you." At my age and in the state of my health it makes me feel even better than ordinarily it would.

This reprint of my King assassination book (which has an exceptional history not exploited) is actually by photographing the pages of the hardback. It was given a different title. And it does not include what was promised, a list of my other books and my address. So, it does not enable readers to get my other books. I haven't complained and I won't because complaint would accomplish nothing.

I am very sorry about the changes in your father mostly after I last saw him, I think. But life does things to us all. But I am very pleased at the fine woman that so attractive and imaginative if a bit quite little girl has grown into!

Love, and Shalom,

Harold