

Jim Lesar
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9/19/95

Dear Jim,

Your letter of the 14th, here today, crossed several of mine to which I add only what follows.

I have no trouble believing there was a misunderstanding. However, that would not have happened if you had not remained so determinedly out of touch with me. What I said and what I acted on is what I had been told you had said. And it was a bit embarrassing for me and took a little time.

You persist in misunderstanding my reason for wanting a press conference, as in saying that media interest in COPA "will enhance attention to your book." My interest is not in selling books. It is in drawing attention to some of the content. I was specific in what of the content and you still are talking about everything but that. I also had a formula under which you could comfortably have said you had not read the book and could refer all questions other than what you went into to me or to the book itself. If it had been last week it would have been to different content.

I did not ask Gary to participate and you did not ask me before you asked him. But if you want a formula for a world-class fiasco, have Blairbrained Livingstone get up at that press conference and ask Gary about the back of the head being blown out, about which they have seen in common, whereas Livingstone thinks I am conspiring against him ~~because~~ because I wrote and said the opposite long before he Killed The Truth.

Gary and Randy have basic disagreements, another invitation to a fiasco. I like both of them. I did ask Randy ^{in April} after reading the last of his papers he'd sent me if he would like to use that occasion to talk about his paper. He postulates a second shot to the President's head which I have since 1966 and have in detail in my books. He confirms that with his study of the X-rays. He declined, preferring a peer journal.

I do not want anyone to puff the book up. I want in simple form attention to its content, what having been appropriate in April facing competition today with what else is topical outside the book.

I want neither my book nor myself to be in any way associated with some of the nuttiness that is inevitable at any COPA meeting. *not new to you!*

It is easy enough to get media attention with a simple and well-written notice of the press release and what would then be available. That does not require a nuthatch. It requires what a press conference wants, newsworthy fact and documentation. Which is what in haste I wrote out to explain each of the documents. Now this is a subject on which normal media concepts do not apply so there is no way of predicting what would happen. The possibilities increase with a competitive situation. But if unlike the nuttiness with which most of you live and work, what is in the book that is worthy of

attention and on any other subject would have it no end is fact, not theory, and it is for the country important fact. As of April the de facto conspiracy on the highest level not to investigate the crime itself, with the President and his right-hand man *who* ^{and} in his own right a public personality part of it. More recently it would have been, in the Simpson-case context, the FBI's own pictures and other proofs that it does fake evidence and did that when its President was killed. *and purposes.*

These things require nobody else and required nothing of you but handing it out, and you do have the documents and the book has the pictures and you have copies of some of the pictures.

With ^{hip} it was something else and it was simple and restricted tightly, to show his videotape of his Dolce interview that I used in the book.

There was no need to depart from any of this and there was every reason not to.

But without ^{even ever} talking to me about it you junked all I'd asked and you'd agreed to and you still do.

I have no interest in that and I've never had any in public attention not connected with a book.

I repeat what I think is obvious: if you did not want to do the press conference all you had to do is say so. If you did not want to do it as I outlined it, again all you had to do is say so. *But you never once spoke to me.*

The content of what I selected seven months ago would have gotten some reporters there, as they told me.

If you want to use any of it at COPA or at any other time, so long as I am not personally connected with it, feel free to use any of the content you want. I offered that to Dan Alcorn ~~last~~ *last week, even with credit to the book or to me.*

I was aware of your work schedule and I'd just assumed that it would not change from what I was familiar with. I also assumed that your health could make that more difficult. But in April you, who knew your work schedule, did agree, with no demurrer. And that, too, I knew. That you were not going to keep your word is what I did not know. And expecting you to, what little I might have thought of doing on my own I could not do. I could not upstage or pre-empt you. And the messages I sent you several times so long ago when I ^{hard} ~~hard~~ ^{hard} nothing from you but did from those to whom I gave messages, was quite simple: if you are not going to do it, OK and just return the books to me. Instead I was told that in perhaps May you had in mind a press conference for an April book in October and then at WOPA. If you got the message I asked be given to you it was a forceful rejection of that yet you now recommend it as the only alternative now.

I know a little about health problems, too, and about what you I hope will spend years in getting first-person, the limitations of age even without those health problems. Can you imagine how it is to work without access to a gold mine of materials

because using stairs is prohibitively dangerous? Or not to be able to use file cabinets other than some momentarily only? Among other things that are not within the experiences of most people. And now Lil is even weaker and we are both in danger of falling and breaking hips. When she is outside I try to be at the door to help her in because that one step up is sometimes too much for her. I take one hand a pull while she raises a foot for that step. Several times she'd have fallen is I was not there and done that. When I am under a prohibition against lifting more than 15 pounds and I have to exert more pull than that.

It is absolutely ludicrous to hold a press conference on a book out for seven months unless there is particular topicality and the book is incidental to that. When the book was just out the documentation of the conspiracy not to investigate the crime itself was topical and was by news concepts newsworthy. When Alcorn phoned the FBI's perjury and Lab and other corruption could not have been more topical.

The book itself has not been topical since not long after you first agreed to hold the press conference explaining that you were holding it for me because it is to dangerous for me to go to DC. In that context that you had not yet read a new book would not have been any embarrassment.

Only you know why you did not do that and do it then.

And I would not think of costing Dave more than a thousand dollars for him to have been there when it was not even necessary for him to have been there.

With the documents my concern had and has nothing to do with Mae or Jennifer. It has to do with your record.

When it is convenient, will you please return it all?

Please let me know as soon as you speak to Carol Deck. I am anxious to get the ms. to Dennis and his wife and if she does not return what she has promptly, to start doing whatever I can about it....After reading and correcting this I suggest that in your own interest because the past cannot be undone you ask yourself why you did not proceed as agreed to, why you had to abandon a safe and secure formula and make up all the nonexistent problems you imagined, why you did so much to involve others knowing I did not want that and without ever talking to me while talking so much to others-why you messed up a real opportunity to do some good. This also means why you are comfortable with all the spurious and baseless theories a la Bud and so uncomfortable with solid and relevant and newsworthy fact. I am suggesting that you try to understand yourself better. With the same reaction when the Simpson case made FBI perjury and faking evidence so topical and NA! loaded with that. While we cannot undo the past we should be able to learn from it.

est,

Handwritten signature

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September 14, 1995

Mr. Harold Weisberg
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Dear Harold:

Your letter to me of September 8th begins with a misunderstanding. You state that September 25th was "the day before you said you would hold a press conference." I said no such thing. I did suggest to Gerry McKnight that if you were agreeable to having a press conference then, I would do so if Wrone could also be present. While waiting to hear from him about this, I called Wrone's house late at night but reached his wife instead of him. After speaking with her, I realized that for Wrone to come to D.C. on August 25th would probably be just as prohibitively expensive as it would have been for him to have come in on August 8-10. By this time I was also faced with an immediate problem: I was becoming very panicky about my ability to finish a brief originally due some four months earlier in a FOIA lawsuit for Oliver North's Marine Corps records. I had asked the Court for a final extension of time, to August 10th, to file this brief.

My plane was scheduled to leave Dulles at 8:30 a.m. on August 11th. I came in to work early (for me) on August 10th, about 10:00 a.m., having worked until 4:00 a.m. the night before, so I could finish this brief and get a few hours sleep before I left for Singapore (not New Zealand, as your letter suggests). I believed that any further request for extension of time might cause the Court to dismiss the case. Around 3:00 a.m. on August 11th, I thought I had finally finished the brief. However, in the process of proofing it I was stunned to learn that the very large segment I had written on Exemption 5 was not there, but only a very early draft which included only boilerplate citation to legal authorities with no discussion at all of the documents at issue or the government's legal arguments. After a few shocked moments of reflection, I realized that while working at home I had stored different drafts of my brief on two different diskettes and then brought the wrong diskette in to work. By now it was too late to return home and fetch the correct diskette (the roundtrip alone would take at least an hour, and May had arranged for a limousine service to pick us up at 5:30 a.m. to go to Dulles). Under the circumstances, I did the only thing I could do. I drafted a motion for yet another extension of time, to and including August 25th, which was filed about 3:45 a.m. I got home around 4:15, and got to bed about 4:30. At 5:00 a.m., May and Jennifer got me up for the trip to the airport.

Because of tension and tiredness, I had not been able to sleep at all. By the time I was able to get some sleep on the flight to L.A., more than 24 hours had elapsed since I had had any sleep at all. And I had had only about 5 in the past 48. I sure that I don't have to tell you that this is not good for a man who has diabetes, a disease very much affected by stress, and high blood pressure.

I returned from Singapore on the evening of August 23rd, after a 26-hour flight from Singapore. Because of developments which occurred while I was in Singapore, when I returned I had urgent matters that had to be tended to in two other cases as well as the Oliver North brief before left the country again two days later. To give you an idea just how pressed I was, I filed my papers in these three different cases at 6:15 p.m. August 26th.

My plane left National Airport at 8:10 p.m. I drove home at a very high rate of speed, arriving there at 6:35 p.m. I called the taxi company to take me to the subway. Unfortunately, I had taken my luggage to my office earlier in the day because I anticipated being able to leave for the airport from there around 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. Fortunately, the cab company came relatively quickly, so I was on the subway shortly after 7:00 p.m. I got to my office at 7:30 p.m., and at 7:35 left the building, luggage in tow, where five minutes later I caught a taxi at the corner of 9th and F, which got me to the airport a couple of minutes before 8:00 p.m. The plane left promptly at 8:10 p.m.

I recite these facts because I think you have absolutely no conception of how busy and hectic my life is. I am trying to cut down on my work load so I don't face these kinds of pressures in the future. I have succeeded in cutting my load of FOIA cases in active litigation from 35 to 25 in the past two years, and hope in the future to cut it much more. However, life has been complicated, inter alia, by nine laser surgery operations in the past year (the most recent was yesterday, and the reactivation of work in some old (7-8 years) and fairly complicated FOIA cases which had lain quiescent for some time.

I am still very busy, but things look a tad better now than they did during the spring and summer. The next two or three weeks are packed with briefs, but they can be spread out some, and by November I may be in pretty good shape.

Now, as to a press conference. I am willing to assist in a press conference, but I will feel very uneasy if no one participating in the press conference has read Never Again. So far I have only had time to read the introductory comments on the subway. (For your praise of my FOIA work in those comments, I thank you very much.) When I was thinking of holding the conference during the first week of August, I was counting on Wrono to carry most of the burden because he at least has read the book and because I had

absolutely no time at all to prepare for such a conference and would only feel comfortable making a very few general comments.

I spoke with Wrone late last night, and he simply needs to have a date certain for the press conference. I assume, although I forgot to pin it down, that he will need at least 3 weeks advance notice in order to make the air rates affordable.

My advice would be to schedule the press conference for October 20-22. There are two reasons for suggesting this date. First, it is probably only time, other than at the time of the 32nd anniversary that you are likely to get substantial news coverage. This is because the COPA convention will take place at the Omni Shoreham hotel that weekend, so the news media are likely to pay more attention to news conferences on this subject. Secondly, COPA will bring in to town Drs. Robertson and Aguilar, and either or both of them could be used to enhance media interest in your book. I spoke with Randy Robertson about this a couple of days ago, and he is willing. I haven't talked with Aguilar about it recently, but two or three months ago he told me he had been reading Never Again and would be willing to participate in a conference at the time of the COPA meeting. Wecht, of course, will also be here for the COPA conference.

I have not checked with Chip Selby, but think it is likely that he could come at this time.

If at this point you don't want set up a press conference or prefer some other date than the ones I have suggested, let me know. Because we have drastically different sleep schedules, the best time to reach me at my office is between 2:30 and 9:00 p.m. on Mondays; noon and 6:00 p.m. on Tuesdays; 2:30 to 6:00 p.m. Wednesdays and Fridays; and noon to 9:00 p.m. on Thursdays. Frequently, I am in the office from noon to 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays, but this is a habit I am trying to break. Anytime you don't reach me, you can always leave a message on my voice mail (office) or answering machine (home).

At the end of your letter you also ask for return of "all copies of what else I sent you" because "I do not want the nuts with whom you are associated to make any use of them." I assume that you are referring to the materials for use in a press conference that you sent me. I can't imagine that May or Jennifer would want to make any use of them, but if you want them returned, I will do so.

Best regards,


Jim