

Please forward

Harold Weisberg
Rt. 8, Frederick, Md. 21701
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Dear Norman,

It is worse than "too bad" when people engage in futilities. It can be fatal. When we kid ourselves we get Hitlers and Nixons.

I felt great when I read of your idea for the Committee for a Fifth Estate. We sure need something like it. Particularly pariahs like me. We become pariahs by doing what those who enjoy a less unwelcome status cannot or do not do.

But Norman, that was more than a year ago. And now for next ^{week} month you are holding a benefit for the organizing committee?

Will you have it organized and functioning in time for the coronation?

And will it spend scarce resources on such projects as Bud's lamentable counter-productivity at Georgetown? Or fail to learn that failures are failures, as his CIA was before you pitched in?

At Georgetown I told you that if you want to let the greasy kid stuff go, come and see me. If you wanted an evaluation other than my work provides, it was available from Bud or Jim. While Bud and I disagree on many things, one being his CIA, whose future was easy to forecast before he started it, I think he would have told you fairly what I have done and have in hand and what I have regularly done that he regarded as impossible when I said I would. Despite our disagreements, Bud and I still work together. Jim would have told you more and with detailed specifics. My hat always has rabbits for him. He is skinning one now (I start work before he goes to bed), to be filed in federal district court in Washington today. The Fourth Estate, if it is consistent, will ignore it. I think that even after Watergate it is a helluva story. I would like to believe the kind of thing that should interest the Fifth Estate.

At Georgetown you said you would speak to me later. Almost four months is not "later." Jim approached you about something, but you were, he said, took busy.

Of course, you may doubt that I have done what I represent. But if you are serious about this progeny whose gestation has already been delayed longer than Gargantua, why do you not look for yourself or ask?

What you seem to be talking about I was doing before you began shaving ^{an} and I am doing it now, as I have every reason to believe nobody else has or will. Again, I invite inquiry. For what I began doing in the 1930s I have endured a lasting curse. And to continue doing it I have put everything I have in hock. ^{literally}.

There are certain consistencies in these four decades. When the UnAmericans passed a law to get me, the same law Weicher referred to in the Ervin hearings in telling of Colson's visit to him, the established literati were silent. (I fought alone, before the grand jury that was supposed to do me in, and got the UnAmerican agent convicted. Ever heard of anyone else doing it?) Recently, when a federal judge actually said that I should be "forever forfe~~nding~~ed" from carrying my investigations on, the literati, including the one who wants to organize a Fifth Estate, remained mute. And no paper reported it.

Doing what I have done has assured I would be permanently without means. But I have also always tried to run my own unfinanced Fifth Estate. Thus when in their time of travail one of the Hollywood Ten came to me he left with the research for a book on the committee that was persecuting them. An enormous, costly and definitive labor so complete it included what you have neither seen nor heard of, a complete record of every public penny that committee has spent - enough to put some of them in jail - more than the one

who went there. The Ten lacked the guts or the imagination to use what ¹ left them have. They also lacked the decency to return so much as a page of the countless boxes they took.

That was so long ago it must have coincided with the beginning of your awareness, if you became aware early.

Recently I wrote two of the Ten who are in good shape. Not to panhandle but to see if they could find the time to explore the possibilities of others making some use of the work I have done and can do nothing with. Dalton Trumbo, for whom I have had the greatest respect from his earliest writing, did not bother to respond. Albert Maltz regretted illness and his inability to find time.

Since your 50th birthday present to yourself of this still-coming Fifth Estate I have wondered if you would also talk big and do nothing. What you have done that I know of was not helpful, was hurtful, and should have cost you some money. That was the Georgetown fiasco. It required little sophistication to know it held no other possibilities. I went after twice refusing only because Bud asked it as a personal favor. The money you put into that would have done more good if you had tossed it in a toilet.

If you dream of inventing the wheel, dream, Norman. But in silence.

We have a wonderful generation of young people. Life and the world you and I have given them will disillusion them enough and fast enough. Please don't add to it. And don't make frustrations for yourself.

It takes more than fine words and noble dreams to do something. One has to know how and then dare. The Hollywood Ten, rich as they were and with all their public support they had, went to jail when they had committed no crime. I had not a penny, no public support, did not even get tried, and to this day that committee has never dared print my testimony.

You may take it otherwise, but my purpose is not to brag.

Not having taken the time to learn if I indeed have that which is now so topical, and having avoided any appraisal by others, you don't know if I bragged at Georgetown, either. Is it unfair to take this complete lack of interest as a measure of your intentions for the Fifth Estate and as a forecast of what it may and may not do -if you get past parties with it?

There is such a need. But there is no need for more futilities, more self-deceptions, more propagandizing of the paranoid which seeks to equate jerking off with love.

I guess I'm lucky I'm too broke to spend the ten bucks next week and have to conserve the miles left in my car that has gone well over 100,000 of them, for while I might enjoy meeting some of the people at the Smiths, I would not enjoy being part of still another futility.

Nonetheless, good luck. I wish I believed it possible.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

*You are cordially invited to join
Mr. Norman Mailer
for an evening of wine and cheese
at the home of Mr. & Mrs. Samuel Smith
3149 Newark St. NW
for the benefit of
The Organizing Committee for a Fifth Estate*

MARCH 23, 1974
8 P.M. \$10 PER PERSON

RSVP:
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