

COPY

April 20, 1995

Ms. Wendy Strothman
Beacon Press
25 Beacon Street
Boston MA 02169

Dear Ms. Strothman:

I am writing to you on behalf of a good friend, Mr. Harold Weisberg. Mr. Weisberg is currently preparing a book which I believe to be of critical significance and which I hope will be of interest to you and Beacon Press.

As you may know, Random House is about to release another book related to the Kennedy assassination. It is a book by Norman Mailer and will be called, *Oswald's Tale: An American Mystery*. An extensive excerpt appeared recently in the *New Yorker*. This book follows on the heels of Random House' publication of the Posner book, *Case Closed*.

As we all know, the assassination of President Kennedy has become a topic which is identified with "assassination buffs." Those who devote time to the study of the topic are often considered as seriously as those who claim to have evidence that Elvis was spotted in Filene's basement! Such a view is not without basis. The topic has spawned ream upon ream of irresponsible, baseless speculation. It has also been turned into a highly profitable enterprise by the likes of Posner, Oliver Stone, and now Norman Mailer.

Nonetheless, it is an exceedingly important part of our history. The assassination of President Kennedy was in many respects "the crime of the century." And it was not just a crime, but also represented a violent overthrow of our government. And much of the irresponsible speculation has been generated by the failure of our government and other institutions to investigate the assassination properly.

Random House continues to fail society by publishing and promoting irresponsible books like Posner's and Mailer's. A free press is one of the fundamental institutions for preserving a democratic society. Among the responsibilities of the press, and a major rationale for the guarantee of its freedom, is the keep the government honest. Certainly in this most important case, the press in the main has failed us.

When Random House came out with Posner's *Case Closed*, Harold Weisberg wrote a monumental critique based exclusively on the evidence. It was published by Carroll and Graf under the title, *Case Open*. I used the book in a course I taught last fall, and I believe that it destroys the pretense that Posner and random House have closed the case. I also read the original manuscript for Weisberg's book. It is impossible to get very far into it without appreciating the extensive damage done by Carroll and Graf in cutting out about two-thirds of the book and doing so with little care to proper editing or preserving the major arguments and the evidence on

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which they are based. The original should, I believe, be published. It is a powerful critique of Posner's arguments, but is also a profoundly informative book in the wealth of detailed evidence it provides about the assassination and its alleged investigation. Instead of pursuing publication of the original manuscript at this time, Weisberg is preparing a book which will be an effort to set the record straight against the background of Posner, Mailer, and other work of that type. Please be aware, if you are not familiar with Weisberg's work, that he does not speculate. His books have always focused exclusively on the documented evidence, much of it in the Warren Commission files.

He is now in his eighties and in poor health. Yet, he continues to work day and night, mainly writing to create a historical record out of what he sees as his obligation to society. He has devoted the last 30 years to this work. He spent many years engaged in successful litigation against the federal government under the Freedom of Information Act, trying to gain the release of documents in the case. He has, and willingly opens to all researchers (even Posner), more than thirty filing cabinets in his home where a third of a million pages of government documents on the case are stored. He is, even in the words of the F.B.I. more knowledgeable about the Kennedy assassination than anyone. This is particularly impressive in light of the evidence Weisberg provides of F.B.I. complicity in the "whitewash" of the Kennedy assassination.

I urge you, as one of the few socially responsible publishers left, to take a look at Weisberg's book. I trust that you will find a book that is very important to our society, as well as one that should generate considerable interest.

You may contact me, or Harold Weisberg directly, if you are willing to take a look at what he has written. If you wish to contact Weisberg directly, his address is:

7627 Old Receiver Road

Frederick, MD 21702

Thank you. I will, of course, be happy to provide you with any additional information that might be helpful.

Sincerely,

Dennis W. MacDonald, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Sociology