

Dear Henry, *Durkin*

1/2/76

My answer to your 12/30 will be shorter than you might like. Our lives change this time of the year. Our only regular income is my wife's as manager of a local M & R Block office. It began today, runs to 4/16, and for this period I'll also have to do part of what she does here. Today this means making up about a dozen orders and responding to that many or more letters, with the late start from having to drive her to the office and the interruption of going for her.

I'm making an exception today and taking care of the correspondence first partly because I'll have to stay up for the CBS show (I'm trying to rest more to recovery more fully and faster) and perhaps can get the packaging done then. Otherwise, this will be the one occasion on which today's orders are not in tomorrow's mail. We'll do them over the weekend and mail them Monday. But in addition to the considerable amount of other work I try to do, of which you know a little, I have had to undertake still new responsibilities simply because there is no choice. I'll be even busier in the time I can work.

The date of issue of Acuarian tends to limit the possibilities. It is remotely possible that at some prior time after appearance of Post Horton I did a radio show by phone in which the question came up, but the detail eliminates that as a possibility.

I had two commissions as a consultant on the McDonald book. I have to regard both as confidential. In meeting these I did supply considerable detail. But not under any other circumstances or in any detail to anyone else. So, my best guess is that the author is connected with one of those for whom I did work. I regret I have to keep the content of the work confidential. I asked for a release and was refused it. This does not keep me from telling you a few of the things I learned, but I'd like you to keep them confidential because I have asked DJ to institute a fraud/mail fraud investigation. In several weeks no response. If I were in NY I'd go to the NY County DA. It is a gross and deliberate fraud, completely made up and out of nothing. It has all the characteristics of a spook black book. There are three different versions and I have all three. FYI only, they contradict each other. They have different times and places, different sponsorship of the job, etc. Different accounts of how he saw Saul's picture. (Saul is next to Raul.)

There is, in, short, nothing in the whole book that stacks. Aside from the fraud.

I understand so vast a sum is being spent in promotion that its high place on the sales list does not really mean the book is in the black yet. This means that someone was running a considerable financial risk. While there are business people who take long shots on profit, this one seems far out. I've heard someone named Geller in Conn. is the angel.

If you hear anything on this I'd like to know simply because there is the possibility that it is a spook job, to destroy all credibility and to build sympathy.

While I've not had time to read it, there are aspects of Anson's that fit this. His formula for one thing. It is a major ripoff, too. So, I have similar interests in his and what he says, etc., on the chance and for archival purposes.

If the lecture bureau could have booked me in L.A. it would have. The major problem is the competition from the commercializers who rip the mind off with the pocket. They have corrupted a fair percentage of current collegiate minds with the wildest stuff. But I have challenged Salwson to arrange a debate, leaving the format up to him.

Thanks and excuse the typos.

Have a good year,

Paperbacks

Best Sellers

Mass Market Paperbacks

Mass market paperbacks are sold on newsstands, in supermarkets and variety stores, as well as bookstores. This analysis is based on reports from representative wholesalers and chains with more than 3,000 outlets in the United States.

- 1 **HELTER SKELTER**, by Vincent Bugliosi with Curt Gentry. (Bantam, \$1.95.) The bloody rampage of Charles Manson's "family" reported by the prosecuting D. A. in the case.
- 2 **CENTENNIAL**, by James A. Michener. (Fawcett, \$2.75.) The land, the people, the flora and fauna of a Colorado town traced through eons and more than a thousand pages.
- 3 **TM**, by Harold H. Bloomfield, M.D., Michael Peter Cain, Dennis T. Jaffe and Robert B. Kory. (Dell, \$1.95.) Four true believers extol—but do not tell how to practice—Transcendental Meditation.
- 4 **THE TOTAL WOMAN**, by Marabel Morgan. (Pocket, \$1.95.) Has your marriage lost its sizzle? Mrs. Morgan has a book full of sexy ploys and religious-inspiration meant to remedy that.
- 5 **LADY**, by Thomas Tryon. (Fawcett, \$1.95.) She lives in a postcard Connecticut town, and it takes a long while to uncover her diabolical secret.
- 6 **THE OTHER SIDE OF MIDNIGHT**, by Sidney Sheldon. (Dell, \$1.75.) This tale of glamorous intrigue in Greece and America is the year's longest-running mass paperback best seller.
- 7 **ALL THINGS BRIGHT AND BEAUTIFUL**, by James Herriot. (Bantam, \$1.95.) A veteran veterinarian recalls his experiences among the lambs of Yorkshire.
- 8 **THE EBONY TOWER**, by John Fowles. (NAL/

Signet, \$1.95.) Five deft exercises in the storyteller's art by the author of "The French Lieutenant's Woman."

- 9 **APPOINTMENT IN DALLAS**, by Hugh C. McDonald as told to Geoffrey Bocca. (Zebra, \$1.95.) "The final solution to the assassination of JFK" proffered by a retired Southern California law enforcement officer.
- 10 **SOMETHING HAPPENED**, by Joseph Heller. (Ballantine, \$2.25.) The middle-aged anguish of a middle-rung corporation man.

Trade Paperbacks

Trade paperbacks are sold, for the most part, in bookstores. This analysis is based on reports from chains with more than 350 stores across the United States.

- 1 **CROCKERY COOKERY**, by Mable Hoffman. (H. P. Books, \$4.95.) How to choose and use those new electric slow cookers.
- 2 **STAR TREK STAR FLEET TECHNICAL MANUAL**, by Franz Joseph Schnaubelt. (Ballantine, \$6.95.) Almost everything—from peace treaties to navigational methods—that fans will need as they shuttle from star to star aboard the U.S.S. Enterprise.
- 3 **THE PEOPLE'S ALMANAC**, by David Wallechinsky and Irving Wallace. (Doubleday, \$7.95.) A compendium of facts on everything from mysterious events to disasters to . . . you name it.
- 4 **THE JOY OF SEX**, by Alex Comfort. (Simon & Schuster/Fireside, \$5.95.) Illustrated how-to book.
- 5 **MORE JOY OF SEX**, by Alex Comfort. (Simon & Schuster/Fireside, \$5.95.) Addendum to No. 4 above.

Paper Back Talk

Assassin's trail? Hugh C. McDonald, retired California law enforcement officer and helicopter service operator, has a wondrous tale to tell. Back in 1964, while serving as head of security for Presidential candidate Barry Goldwater, he was told by his onetime C.I.A. boss the name of the man who actually killed John F. Kennedy. "Saul," a professional assassin, had been hired by "certain private interests" who had reason to desire Lyndon B. Johnson in the Presidency; Lee Harvey Oswald had been recruited to fire at the same time to cover up the hired killer's guilt.

A man obsessed, McDonald stalked the elusive Saul across Western Europe in circumstances worthy of a novel of international intrigue. At last, in 1972, he met his man in London's Westbury Hotel and obtained his confession. Saul disappeared into the shadows, McDonald hurried home to sell his story. But publishers here, fearing lawsuits, would have none of it unless it was presented as fiction.

Finally he decided to publish the account himself, arranged

with the Kable News Co., a large paperback distributor, to handle it under its Zebra imprint. Last month Kable sent out 700,000 copies of "Appointment in Dallas: The Final Solution to the Assassination of JFK," narrated with total recall and embellished with fuzzy pictures of Saul. McDonald embarked on a cross-country tour of TV stations.

The true story at last? The quintessence of flakiness? Whatever the book is, it's No. 9 on this week's mass market best seller list.

Novelizations. Movie tie-ins are the specialties of some of the savviest pros in the paperback industry. Most large houses have an editor whose duty it is to follow the flicks, poring over trade journals daily, making the rounds in Hollywood three or four times a year. Sometimes he can arrange for the purchase of a novel still in manuscript that seems destined to become a film. Often, when he hears of a likely script, he buys tie-in rights from the producer, arranges for a "novelizer" to convert it into a book.

Usually a novelization is little more than a faithful transformation of the script into narrative style: heavy on dialogue and the movements and facial expressions of the characters, short on psychological undertones. This month four books based on just-released films are in the racks: "The Adventure of Sherlock Holmes' Smarter Brother," by Gilbert Pearlman (Ballantine); "The Black Bird," by Alexander Edwards (Warner); "Embryo," by Louis Charbonneau (Warner), and "Lucky Lady," by Julie Rood (Bantam).

Because its producer expects "Lucky Lady" to be one of the year's biggest grossers, Bantam's print order is 350,000 copies (instead of the average 110,000 to 250,000). Of Julie Rood, they'll say only that it's "the pseudonym of a West Coast-based historical novelist." Of the fact that the eager-to-please-the-public producer substituted a cheery conclusion even while Bantam was shipping out its first copies with a sad ending . . . well, in the publishing world such embarrassments just can't be avoided.