

Mr. Richard Gallen
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New York, N.Y.

7/25/89

Dear Dick,

A letter from a friend reminds me of the Marrs book Carroll & Graf are printing and of something I've been intending to ask you about. I'm sure they did not like my reluctance to skim a manuscript or what I told them but aside from my own reputation, which remains good except for the contrived slanders, I was not about to be other than cautious and careful with anyone you told to get in touch with me.

The friend, in the course of writing about the last years of a dear mutual friend, spoke of the meretricious books on the JFK assassination and mentioned that quite some time ago she had been asked by a publisher to read Marrs' manuscript and condemned it thoroughly. So, apparently, it has been kicked around and getting kicked out for some time. I went over enough of it to be absolutely certain it is a very bad book.

At some point some of the people regularly defamed in such books ^{are} going to be able to sue and some publisher is going to be hurt. Most are not in a position to sue and some don't dare, like the mafia types who are regularly slandered. Shapolsky did a couple such books, both reprints, and NAL is about to reprint one of McGraw-Hill's. This one is "Mafia Kingfish," by John H. Davis. I'm pretty sure he did not deliver the book that was contracted from the letter describing it and asking for my help with it. I enclose one of the pages referring to me.

Davis had a senior at local Hood College (which is excellent, by the way, and all my records are going there) working here, unsupervised, for all the free time of the last half of her senior year. Of that and the considerable amount of time, unpaid, of course, it required of me, there is no mention in the book. Instead there is the ~~single~~ page I enclose. It is utterly and completely false and worse, it was fabricated when he knew it was false. I never laid eyes on Wasserman, he never sent anyone here and he asked nothing of me. I initiated the very short correspondence for entirely different reasons, to get a reaction to what the House assassins committee had said about Marcello. (There is not even a reasonable basis for suspecting that Marcellos is responsible for the JFK assassination, by the way. It is also contrived.) Neither Davis nor McGraw-Hill sent me a copy on publication but a professor friend asked me to annotate his copy for the historical record, and I immediately wrote Davis and when he did not respond, McGraw-Hill, where the editor said merely she was referring my letter to Davis. He was unresponsive until they were handling NAL's reprint, some months later, when he first wrote me an entirely nonresponsive letter and then, clearly at counsel's insistence, wrote me again. That also was entirely unsatisfactory. I think a letter I wrote NAL triggered the belated Davis correspondence. I wrote McGraw-Hill and NAL saying that in context it remained defamatory, it was all fabricated and I wanted it out. Instead they removed all other references to me and made this one I said was unsatisfactory. (They can't take back what has been published and in context they are still insisting on the fabricated defamation.) Even the reference to correspondence is dishonest and suggestive because it suggests that I withheld that correspondence from him and the correspondence itself refutes what he says about it - does not even indicate what he says or even suggest it - and because, aside from duplicate filing here, some of it disappeared with Davis' assistant. He and McGraw-Hill have not responded when I asked for its return. He at least has copies because his assistant made copies in addition to those I sent Davis earlier. I can understand their reluctance to eliminate the defamation entirely because the book pretty much hangs on it and this is because Marcello didn't do a damned thing after that report came out. Or, he was entirely indifferent to allegations that he had JFK assassinated. Had he cared he could have bought copies from the FBI for 10¢ a page after they were disclosed to me. Or Wasserman could have. (Elsewhere the book refers to Wasserman as Marcello's "top" lawyer when in fact he was a prestigious immigration lawyer not on Marcello's staff and he beat the government for Marcello.)

So, in the hardback Davis and McGraw-Hill have a "top" mafioso's "top" layer "foraging" with the free run of my place for much of a year and it is knowingly and deliberately false.

What ~~had~~ actually happened is that I wrote Wasserman, not Marcello, after that House report came out, he replied and I replied to that, enclosing a few records. It was my initiative, for perfecting the historical record only, and they've stolen one of these three letters that I don't have an extra copy of and won't return it or a copy.

The complete and vicious fabrication you'll see if you read this carefully, is "solid evidence" in support of Davis' overall fabrication.

If it is libellous I can't do a thing about it but I am wondered whether it is under the law today a libel and whether it is, from the history I've given you, malice, or malicious, in either the original form or in combination with it in the crap I expect to be in the NAL edition.

NAL has not responded to either of my letters and neither was returned. They were delivered and the indications are that the first triggered the belated Davis/McGraw-Hill response. There has been not even pro forma denial of my description of the writing as deliberately false, fabricated and without any basis for the fabrication.

Even the "correction" is not true. Those files were not "released to the public." In their complete form they are available from me only but ^{most} some are accessible in the FBI's reading room.

I'm 76 now, even more limited as the result of negligence by a urologist in 1/86, which gave me new and more limiting venous thrombosis, and I couldn't even think of the cost of suing. But I would like to know whether you think it crosses the line and is libel. Or anything else.

I hope you are all well and happy, that Jill's ^uproject when I last heard ^{from} of you was successful, and unless I've lost track of time completely, that the boys are well started on satisfactory careers and the other good things in life.

Best to you,

Harold