

Jim and Dave, re "King" on NBC, Mann, Lane and the FBI 2/11/78

I have just read the Shales review in today's Post.

Several days ago I taped a Mann promotions appearance on "Today."

Because the local electronics shop has not yet completed installing my system for taping from TV I'd have to do it by keeping entirely quiet during all those hours and neither my phone nor I can do that.

Earlier I suggested to Dave that he ask NBC for the script for his archive and any other relevant records they would care to deposit.

Adding the content of the Shales review to what I heard Mann say I believe that the archive requires both a tape and the script.

So I hope he will ask for it. Now.

I am reminded of a surprised line George Gardner once pulled on me, almost an astonished accusation, "You're defending the FBI."

I guess truth is a stranger.

But in this case I'm really wondering about asking for fairness doctrine time to address the emphasis part of this series of shows. I'm now inclined to favor it, regardless of the intrusion into the little time we have.

This will be another distortion of history that will reach an extraordinarily large audience.

My belief is that when the show is aired plagiarism, real plagiarism, not just taking the idea, will be an important part of it as it is in the Shales review. It may be the point at which to start trying to do something about this. NBC and Mann were both on notice long before they shot the film. NBC's answers would demean a Philadelphia lawyer, as Jim may remember.

So I think you should look at this part carefully and if possible each of you tape that part for reviewing it later, as I'll try to do with an air tape, a recorder near the TV set.

As one means of assessing fidelity I suggest watching for the presence of Art Hanes Sr. or his absence. He was responsible for Bull Connor. If he is absent this can be attributed to the Lane treatment of him in Code Name Toro.

I have Mann crediting Lane with all the original investigative work and describing his good buddy as the greatest investigator of them all.

I also have the indignant letter Les Payne's boss wrote to New Times, which printed it, and put Mann and NBC further on notice. I think I sent it to NBC.

In all of this, as Shales suggests, there is the commercializing corruption of these great tragedies and the momentous events. Is it the time and the matter over which to seek to address them?

Best,

Howard - your opinions, too, including on the law.

Lawyer, former publisher for whom I did the job on the McDonald book. He is the one who took I Am Curious Yellow to the Supreme Court and won. He is an expert on publishing law.

Mr. Richard Callen
7 W 81 St, 4C
New York, N.Y.

2/11/78

Dear Dick,

Too much, too much that is incredible, has happened since we last spoke.

Because of possible relevance in what follows, having certified to one federal court that I know more about the JFK assassination and its investigation than anyone in the FBI DJ has done the same thing to another federal court in order to force me to be its consultant in my suit against it - for the suppressed ^{ing} evidence.

I have about 60,000, probably more pages of it now. I've read about 50,000 of them.

And may I boast - I was completely correct in both my analysis and my investigations and in ^{Frame-Up}.

You will remember that you met Les Payne of Newsday when I last stayed with you. Les then was working with me on my work part of which I let him have to do what because of my medical and other limitations I was then not able to do. Again I was correct in what I gave him and he brought certain facts about espionage in Memphis to light. In this all he did was add names to my work.

I have since added enormously to what he did and to this extent: I have done what he did and more, much more. It blew his mind when I showed it to him last time I saw him.

NBC has stolen this and is using it in the Abby Mann multi-part movie, King, to be aired beginning tomorrow night.

How it happened is a long story but it was through Mark ^{ane}, who was working with Mann. I have juicy quotes from both. The theft is not only overt, Lane ridicules me and Jim Hear over it, close to if not with libel in his very bad book, Code Name Zorro. I put Prentice ^{all} on notice before publication, as I did with NBC.

With Prentice Hall, Les's editor having written a letter of protest to a magazine over the thievery, I sent P-H a copy of that letter and received their thanks.

The book was introduced with a press conference at the National Press Club. Imagine my surprise when Oscar Collier, twice part of my past, came up to me and needled, or intended to, by saying they think the book is action proof.

The thievery was not enough for these whores. They also had to improvise, both Mann and ^{ane}, probably originally by Lane, that the FBI killed Dr. King. Not only false but no basis for even theorizing it except the incompetent and unfactual improvisation for a hot thing then safe, lambasting the FBI.

It is past time for an effort to seek redress for these endless thefts of my work. Right now I need what a successful suit, even a successful settlement, could yield. I need help to complete my work and to put someone in a position to continue it. I have such a person in mind if I can find the means, a very fine and brilliant young man who until July is clerk to a federal appeals court judge. He is Howard Roffman, who also writes beautifully.

My question is about suing NBC and P-H. P-H gave a six-figure advance on the book. The movie was budgeted at \$5,000,000. I do not know the value of the commercial time. The initial budget for the promotion of the book was \$50,000.

So I hope you can see that part of the movie. I don't know when it comes by night. I will have a tape of it, this or these parts.

Thanks and best to you all.

Sincerely,