

11.30/73

Dear Bill,

Over the years I have always been available for any help I might be able to give anyone at the Enquirer and I can't recall a time I asked anything for these minor services. I have been glad to be of help. As you will recall, we have never had a dispute about anything, even when I've gone to some trouble to prepare material that then was not used. What I call you about earlier in the week, however, is different. If I have no reason to believe anyone intended unfairness, I believe I was treated unfairly and that the way in which the Enquirer killed the story of which you know compounded the damage to me by foreclosing any other market for the hottest JFK assassination story since the crime. I had been saving that story for years, awaiting a propitious time. The 10th anniversary was that time. You went for it big, decided against it and then never told me. I found out only by accident when I phoned because I was getting radio and TV attention and wanted to know if you wanted me to promote your issue.

You have your own style so when I was asked for something exceptional for you to mark the anniversary I also suggested that you might want to write it yourself. In talking about the story - and I laid it all out in advance and it is precisely as I said it would be - I said this is a story on which I placed a high value and I would not sell it except at your top rate. Of this also there was never any doubt.

I am now trying to sell the story for which the ideal time has passed. I don't know what will happen or what I can expect.

Whatever the reason for killing the story, it had nothing to do with me and was in no way anything the Enquirer did not know in advance. I do think your obligation to me is undiminished by your decision to kill. For me, this kind of story represented other values and benefits of which you are probably aware, so the fact that it did not appear represents another cost to me.

The cost of collecting the kind of proof you got is astronomical. It took a very long time and a certain amount of ability that in itself represents a cost and an investment. Measured against these costs, it is not likely that if you had paid your top price it could have represented a real profit to me. Killing the story for what appears to be reasons of policy and not telling me is therefore a minor disaster for me.

You were not in on this at the beginning. However, when Simon was here I asked that there be sale abroad, where I believe there is a market for this kind of piece, and you were then consulted. Again I got no answer until I phoned, and when I found out you did not try to sell subsidiary rights, I wrote my agent in England. Again the gremlins worked overtime, delaying my letter to him. His response was favorable, but the anniversary was by then upon us. However, had I been informed promptly - and that means in September - there would have been plenty of time to arrange for foreign use that would not have interfered with you and would have let me recover some of my considerable investment in this.

If I don't for a minute think that any of this was deliberate and if I do know it is exactly opposite all the dealings I have had with you over the years, I also have no doubt at all that it did happen this way, did hurt me, and need not have if your people had merely informed me.

This is why I phoned you, so we could discuss this and I could let you know what you apparently did not when you were consulted and I was sent a check for \$150. That sum hardly covers the extra time I put in on this for you and the cost of the copying I did for you. The copies I make are few, so the cost each is high.

I spent the equivalent of two working days with Simon (who we liked very much). I spent another half day with your photographer. Plus some time on the phone and in getting ready. I do not think the \$150 is fair compensation even for that alone.

This coincides with another story on which I was not treated as I am sure you usually treat writers, the Gaudet story in New Orleans. I phoned and suggested the story immediately, the beginning of the first day. Your people seemed interested. Then they decided to send their own man, South. The story, as he found out, was precisely as I had said to begin with and it is because it was that it was killed. From what I knew there was no other possibility. If I had been told that you would not go for that story, I could have tried elsewhere. When South was in New Orleans, I did help him, giving him contacts and telling him to use my name. I am sure that those he approached on my suggestion welcomed and helped him. For your purposes it may be irrelevant that it has cost me a considerable amount of money to get into a position to do these kinds of things. I am not like the regularly-employed reporter who develops his sources and contacts while he is being paid.

I did not write to complain about this and my relations with you in the past never led to anything like this.

However, I'd have felt better if I had been sent nothing. ~~XXX~~ Sending me \$10.00 for taking the story idea I suggested when I already had 100% of it in hand and more than has yet appeared, going ahead with it and finding out only part of what I reported immediately and then taking more time of me, which I was and will be willing to give you, amounts to an unintended insult.

These are exceptional experiences in my dealings with the Enquirer. They are quite foreign to our personal relationships. However, this does not diminish their cost and hurt to me. I do think the Enquirer can easily afford to treat me on matters like this with what I would regard as more fairness. If I am disappointed over the end of the fake threat against Nixon, ^{Story} that would have been a big deal to me and I would not have mentioned it without other cause to write. I do think the \$150 check for the ~~Russell~~ Russell thing, which is less than fair payment for the time I spent with your people, is something you should reconsider.

It has been some years since I did magazine work. Money was a lot tighter then. However, I do not recall a single occasion on which a story was ordered and not used in which there was not payment for the story as though it had been used. This used to be the norm. It cannot be otherwise today without gross unfairness to writers. If I do not contest your right to make your own decisions, I do believe you should be willing to pay for them.

And in this case the cost to me was greater because the manner in which all of it was handled denied me the possibility of any foreign market for a story that, with the timing of the 10th anniversary, could have been quite good.

I do hope you will reconsider this, as I hope you will try to put yourself in my position.

I also hope your planning for your new project is going well.

Sincerely,