

9/1/71

Dear Harold,

I am sorry, but I do not feel ~~it~~ that it would be at all proper for me to ~~send~~ forward your letter to Wolff for several reasons:

① The fact that he knows that I have read it could give him the impression that you are writing it for my benefit.

② I really must be impartial in this matter. I cannot take on the role of a partisan by acting as a middle man in your communications with Wolff.

③ My forwarding your letter to Wolff will insinuate to him that I am conspiring with you against him. If we back him into a defensive position he won't reply to either of us.

Please, Harold, you must rewrite that letter. I am not jury as far as Mr. Wolff is concerned, but Mr. Polioff who is researching an article on the New York Times. I don't want Wolff to know that I am sharing any but the most marginal information.

with you - certainly not that I am
sending you copies of my correspondence
with you.

By the way, although I think he
overreacted terribly, I think you showed
poor judgement with that footnote, espe-
cially the way you phrased it. It had
to place Wolff in a terribly embarrassing
~~into~~ spot and I don't blame him
for being pissed off. After all, anyone
who knew Wolff would know that
the footnote referred to him.

See you Saturday
Jerry

P.S. almost forgot, Wolff's address is:

El Jardin
Mijas (Malaga)
Espana

P.S. enclosed are some suggestions for
changing your letter.

Dear Mr. Wolff,

par 1 Mr. Polioff phoned me last night about another matter, and he told me he had been in touch with you. As you know, he is writing an article about the New York Times, and I have opened my files to him. I asked him for your address so that I might ~~address~~ write to you myself. ~~It is~~ it is my concern for you alone that impels this letter... (rest of par. OK)

par. 2 OK

par. 3 OK

par. 4 Mr. Polioff would not discuss his correspondence with you except to say that you ^{doubted the authenticity of my} ~~doubted the authenticity of my~~ some of my notes, that you stood by ^{the} "What you said in your letter to the Times, and that you have a low opinion of my writing. On the latter point, we both know how subjective... (rest of par. OK)

par. 5 OK

par. 6 OK

par. 7 As regards the authenticity of my notes, I assure you they are authentic.

As my files and this letter will show, I do not even take time to read and correct my terrible typing. (rest ok until...) ~~While I was~~ On the occasion of publication of your letter, when Mr. Polioff phoned me about it, Howard Roffman, who ~~was~~ ... (rest ok until...) While I was talking to Mr. Polioff who was asking me questions ... and it is he, not I, who selected it from the relevant parts that I then quoted to Mr. Polioff over the phone.

Par. (829) OK.

8/31/71

Mr. Geoffrey Wolff
c/o Jerry Policoff,

Dear Mr. Wolff,

When Jerry Policoff phoned me last night about another matter, he told me you had written him to dispute my account of what you have, for whatever reason, made into an incident. It is my concern for you alone that impels this letter, for which I do not have time. I began writing at 5:30 a.m. this morning, I have to do a late-night radio show tonight, and I have at least six books started and continue my investigations, including today, in the Archives. At past 58, I still work a day few young man can or will attempt.

However, each morning, because my doctor wants me to. I lay writing and research aside long enough to tak a brisk walk in the mountains in which we live. This is my thinking time. I think of my research, plan my writing for which I never have time for outlines or notes. If this may show in the finished product, the mangitude of what I have undertaken and of my output leaves no alternative. Although I am at the end of an other book, working on the last chapter, you were on my mind this morning. So before I return to work, I am writing you.

Obviously, neither you nor I can do anything for the book FRAME-UP now, six months after pub date. David and Harris arranged no single promotion and the intent of the Times, literary assassination, has become the reality. The incredible part to me is that you loaned yourself to this. Please remember that once your letter appeared, I wrote Leonard asking that he ~~send~~^{send you} a copy of it and of my unanswered letter of 1966 to you. You and he -and the despicable Kaplan who has become a sick man on the subject of as assassinations- all failed to reply. So there is no gain for me, none possible, in taking this time.

Jerry said you have a low opinion of the writing in FRAME-UP. We both know how subjective these opinions are. You are not alone in expressing it, nor are you in the majority of the opinions expressed to me. Nor is it relevant. Neither you nor any reviewer reviews only those books he likes. However, nothing has changed since we first discussed my writings, when I apologized for handing you a rough~~X~~ draft, which is what the private (and reprint) printing of WHITENASH. Everything I have published is the rough draft, with the exception of FRA E-UP, which Harris, personally, edited. But it is an edited rough draft, contracted from about twice that size. From the book I handed you in May of 1966 until today, aside from two-dozen file drawers of research, which represents considerable work, I have published well over a million words of solid, schoarly research, successful challenge of which has not been made and no single claim of inaccuracy has ever been made to my face, including ~~the~~ by the uninformed sycophants (published in serial form by the Washington Post) and Commission lawyers. Quite the contrary, one of the members of the Commission thanked me for some of it. It is obvious I have not exploited this in my writing. But considering the size of what I have done, size alone, and the fact that I have been all alone, with neither income nor subsidy, I had no choice. I could not sit and hone, could not revise and edit. The choice was and remains between this and making the historical record that rightly or wrongly I consider must be. I know of nobody else in the work who has been willing to ruin his personal life and branrupt himself to do it. Perhaps history will record my judgement wrong, but there now seems to be no prospect. You do not know what I know. but you have read two of my books and these alone should have made you apprehensive about the kind of society in which we live.

In FRAME-UP there is one exception to an undeviating practice. + identified the writer of everything quoted and referred to by name, even when it was wire copy. I had reasons, including the fact that the one part of our society that, by and large, was true to its traditional responsibilities, was the working, on-the-street, newsman. You are the one exception. The failure of the press to fulfill its traditional role was management and editorial fault, not that of the reporters. Without the abdication of its watchdog role in our society, none of the needless tragedies in the wake of the great on, the assassination of John Kennedy, would have come to pass. With the Post this was particularly true because

of Wiggins, who cast his paper in what I regard as a subversive role, that of an unofficial arm of government. The Post is now being honest about it. Recently Dick Harwood said so quite explicitly in a single-page article, and made clear, without naming him, that it was Wiggins' doing. In this footnote I carefully avoided naming or even identifying you because I knew this earlier. As you realize, I also wrote that footnote long before this belated admission by the Post. I had had personal dealings with Wiggins, all faithfully and contemporaneously recorded and filed, in files that will someday be part of an Archive in a major university. Louis Horen, who had read the book in manuscript and on his own offered to and did submit it to his own British publisher (the negative decision was policy, not editorial), phoned Wiggins, who invited me to meet with him. Wiggins told me to write him a column and he'll print it. He never did. But in mention of you, I even masked the fact that you were book-review editor.

The only identification of Geoffrey Wolff is that sad business is by Geoffrey Wolff.

One of the few things Jerry told me of your letter is that you think or imply I could have made these notes after your letter was published by the Times. This is as false as it is impossible. First, as my files and this letter will show, I do not even take time to read and correct my terrible typing, for to do that is at the cost of other work. I have hundreds of hours of untranscribed tapes of interviews. I haven't written any notes at any later time and all are dated. These have, in addition, internal dating. My poverty has been such that I have always used whatever second-hand paper I had at any time, always using all of it up before I bought any. Thus you will find that as I wrote WHITWASH on the back of second-hand mimeographed literature about my farm, the notes of my conversations with you and others at the Post and even the carbons of some of my correspondence are on this kind of paper. Successively I used whatever second-hand paper was available, often the discarded letterheads of businesses and offices that moved, given to me by kind friends who, knowing I was broke, save this for me when they saw it. The typewriter used was older than you when I had to discard it, perhaps a year ago. And the best proof you can learn for yourself. It happens that from time to time young people come here. They have unimpeded access to my files for their own work. On the occasion of publication of your letter, when Jerry phoned me about it, Howard Roffman, who had just completed his first year at the University of Pennsylvania, was out guest. While I was talking to Jerry, who was asking me questions, I called to Howard. I have a separate file on the non-publishing history of WHITWASH. Howard went to it, removed the appropriate file, and it is he, not I, who selected from it the relevant parts that I then quoted to Jerry over the phone. If you sincerely believe what I have trouble believing you do not, confabulation and conscience being what they are, Howard lives at 8829 Blue Grass Road, Philadelphia 19152. But the fact is that you are wrong. The fact also is that neither you nor Leonard did the obvious and customary, checked with me. And the fact is that your letter to the Times is irrelevant to the character or content of the Kaplan review. Whatever impelled you to do what I would have thought so out-of-character for you, you were in every detail wrong and you thus became part of a shameful thing, the deliberate literary assassination of the only work presenting the other side of the official mythology about the most costly single crime in history. You also became a self-appointed apologist for the unacceptable and inexcusable, the federal record in this and other assassination investigations. It is for you to live with, not me. I think, in time if not already, unless you are a man entirely unlike the man I met in 1966, this will nag you. It should. It is a rotten thing. To blame me for your lack of independence when your livelihood was in issue is as cowardly as it is dishonest.

I ask nothing of you. There is nothing you can do to undo the harm you have done. I can conceive of no way of reviving what you helped the Times kill. The one thing I would think the man I met five years ago would want to do is clear his own conscience.

And by the way, it is not alone you who discussed your then opinion of WHITWASH with me. You discussed it with your then secretary, Vivian Hudkin, who discussed it with me on several occasions when I had sought you out or dropped in to see Paul Herrin and you were not in. Sincerely, Harold Weisberg

