

9/21/74

Dear John,

I should have made and sent you a carbon of a letter I wrote Walsh at Rolling Stone early this week. Sorry I forgot. I mentioned you in it. He may or may not speak to you.

What happened is that one I'd trusted decided to do an article on the basis of my new book. He made not one but four simultaneous submissions. I learned of it just as I was leaving town last ~~Friday~~ week. (A rich man who systematically suffers a social conscience wanted to talk to me about Ford but decided against it by the time I reached him.) I wrote this younger former friend a scorching letter and gave it to my friend and colleague in this new book when we met at the airport to work for about an hour in the Ray case. He then got in touch with the other guy, who wrote letters withdrawing the submission. But he wrote only three letters, my colleague noted. So, because one of the four submissions was to Rolling Stone and Walsh had not responded to my answer to his letter responding to mine on the irresponsibility of his planned think piece on theories of the assassinations, I reminded him that the first approach of any kind I had made was through you to them. You will remember you told me you got no where.

There really are a number of major stories in this new work. As of day before yesterday a TV net is agonizing over one, which they haven't told me and I don't really care. They asked me for proof of something I mention casually and, under the circumstances, you can understand I tell you in confidence: my relations with the late Senator Russell and his disagreement with a major part of the Warren "report. (If you are too young, he was one of the seven Commissioners.) This interest, this one request for proof not published in the work, can be trivial or significant, I don't know which. But the TV net attention to the content can be a major breakthrough for us as well as financial salvation on the book. We had to borrow to print, besides the not inconsiderable costs prior to the printer. I have also made a single print-media approach and I can hear for a couple of weeks. In fact, I don't yet have a book to send. I'll explain. It is also why you don't have a copy in confidence.

The printer's paper source is on strike. He had to get a special shipment from out of town, which ran our costs up something like another 10%. Then he shot the negatives too large, which I discovered in checking the blues. This cost him heavily for he had to reshoot the entire job and then restrip. So, instead of making a new set of blues for me to check, he went ahead and reprinted. Well, he had a page upside down in one sig and four out of order in another. He thus wasted 2/7 of the entire paper cost and had these two signs to reprint. As of day before yesterday his new paper had not come. The TV net is working from a xerox. And I can't afford another xerox. I have the one from which we indexed.

So, as often happens, I have to waste time sort of in the role of fireman, in this case to prevent what I take to be an uncontrolled ego doing an unconscionable thing. I feel sorry for the fellow who did it because when he was personally confronted with a whole string of fictions he had fabricated in order to justify to himself what he had done he was considerably embarrassed. He is not by nature a crook nor irresponsible.

This is another aspect of the Yazjian syndrome. With Y is may be worse. In this case, while the fellow told himself otherwise, he had a craving for attention.

As you know, books are ^{not} folded my hand, so we can't pay for press time to have a couple of defective books folded so we can have a few to work with.

Wayne Chastain phoned me right after I returned. We had a long talk. As I told you, I like Wayne. I do not think his thesis on the King assassination is tenable even through in 2/71 I did have reason to believe that the real Youngblood was in Memphis at that time. There need be nothing unusual about this. What I'm going into this for is to try to help you spin fewer wheels. There is an easy test you can make in your own mind. If you were part

of an assassination plot would you make yourself conspicuous in the area in which it was to be committed? If you were part of a plot, would you have a man in the scene who had no function in it but could be recognized?

Apply the same test to Dealey Plaza. Sprague's and Garrison's approach. The Yazijian fictions based on realities that are irrelevant to the fictions and jazzed up with visuals that are not related to anything he claims.

Livingston has finally promised me he will shut up. I hope he does.

The last insanity of his I received is something called "Confidential Flash," the piece signed Val Howard, probably a name used instead of one that could be damaged by appearance in such a rag.

This whole crazy/stupid Livingston thing has been very hurtful and comes at a time when there is such serious work to be done, of which he has done none; and when the needs of the sinister forces are great, so that they go in for this kind of stuff. Meanwhile, he was so utterly incompetent about it that we can't get from him a live clue to the source of the Department of Disinformation. Whether it is official or other.

Each element of the press has its own standard of "objectivity." If a quotable source says something it wants to print it become objective to quote, no matter how inherently incredible it may be.

The net result is that people are misinformed.

Can any reality live up to the Yazijian manufactures?

All the stuff you got from Livingston was rubbish. For whatever my opinion is worth, the time and money you spent on it were worse than wasted. And your audience is worse off for it. You are young and will learn from your own experiences. But please try to learn the most difficult thing of all as soon as you can: be your own devil's advocate. You can't really afford these wastes, in time you will not be proud of the time and judgement, and with the time and money you might have given your audience what it did need to know.

Let me warn you about another one of these nut capers you can expect. I last heard that the N.O. coroner was upset that Clay Shaw was buried without an autopsy. You can be your own devil's advocate on this by determining if he exhumed and performed an autopsy. By accident I was able to do some checking. It says that Shaw was in terminal cancer for a year the last six months of which he had a medical student living with him. The report of the mysterious ambulance the day before can't be found and won't respond to appeals to report. It was an anonymous call. The part I fear is that this cancer also reached his brain, which is what happened to Ruby. Can't you imagine what the nuts can do with that? But it does happen in real life and there really was no reason to kill Shaw anyway. What he was charged with was inherently incredible, so it will be alleged that in his dying moments he was about to confess to it.

I owe you the apology for not sending you a carbon of my letter to Walsh. The rest of this is a little time I take before breakfast in an effort to help you be a better reporter. In time you will come to understand that all this crap appearing almost without exception in all the alternative media is the most effective service to the Department of Disinformation, a service so thorough it is beyond their capacity to buy. This does not mean that they may not figure in it. I've no proof and no reason to believe they do. All that concerns me is the result. One is to destroy all credibility. Another is to make truth unacceptable, unidentifiable. Another is to reduce the little chance that the major media, which has been reached, will pay any attention to what is solid. And the major media is the means by which most people are reached. Including those who do have influence. I've lived with this long, Jon. I hope you will believe me.

Another apology for the haste and the typos. Sincerely,