

Ms. Katherine J. Trager, deputy general counsel
Doubleday
1540 Broadway
New York, NY 10036

8/27/94

Dear Ms. Trager,

Enclosed are Lesley Oelsner's letter to me from Random House and my response.

I heard last year, before Amas, that Anchor has contracted Case Closed. My instinctive reaction was to write Doubleday then because, as I'll come to, I owe you one, so to speak. I am aware that many changes have taken place in most publishing houses but the name at least is the same. But I feared that what I'd write might be misunderstood. I was sent copies of several letters Posner had written in which he said your pub date would be next month. With what I had heard and with the potential it could have other than relating to me I did write. Still not having seen your book, I assume that what Posner could have gotten from the most dubious of sources relating to others also is not in your book. When I checked the nearby stores it had not yet gotten here. Because I do not move around very well and any slight auto accident can be dangerous for me I'll wait until I am again near the bookstores in this part of town.

So, why do I, at 81 and in poor health, still remember that I owe Doubleday one?

In 1965, when my Whitewash: the Report on the Warren Report, by far the first book on that subject, was at Pocket Books they went for it big. The editor who read it, Eugene Prakapis, told me, and these are close to if not his exact words, "Mr. Weisberg, with your background and our know-how, we have another Green Felt Jungle and you will soon be one of the best-known men in the country."

If you are too young to understand this, The Green Felt Jungle was the best-selling book of 1964. *His prediction was for 1965.*

The book was approved enthusiastically all the way up to Boris Shimkin, the top man at S & S. Prakapis told me why ^{S. M. H. W.} he felt he had to decline the book. It was because they had published a fraudulent book, Calories Don't Count and some six were under indictment over it. He quoted Shimkin as saying that if they were to publish my book it would be "the red flag under the Department of Justice charging bull." Regretfully, I agreed with him. *I would not have wanted to be indicted - either.*

Prakapis then said, "But we would like to help you." I told him I welcome that. He then explained that when Doubleday wanted S & S to reprint a book it came to him, so he was well known at your shop and perhaps his word might mean a little because of the relationship. He then said, "I'm going to ask for Sam Vaughn to read it. He is Eisenhower's and Nixon's editor." He phoned Vaughn in my presence, told him they wanted very much to publish my book but for special reasons could not, and he thought Vaughn should read it and Doubleday should consider it. *would*

In about a week I had a letter declining the book, with the comment in almost these

exact words, "perhaps ~~&~~ if you'd gone a bit afield we'd have been more tempted." I thought I understood that but I wanted to know more. So on my next trip to New York I phoned. First I got your then president's secretary and then she put him, Mr. McCormick, was his name Ken? on the phone.

As Pocket had been honest with me, so was he. He told me that they had had a general meeting on the book ~~had~~ ^{and} had discussed it thoroughly. And that "Our reason was not editorial and not easy to arrive at."

Not only was that honest, and most of a hundred or so here and abroad were not honest, whenever I phoned he always took the phone. My recollection of those conversations after all these years and all that happened in them does not include what we spoke about. I think it was my getting free advice from him.

Only someone who lived through my then experiences can appreciate how much the little honesty I found meant to me.

When after my year~~s~~ operation of 1989 I was showing steadily weaker and had already defied the actuarial tables I decided that with what time remains to me I would, to the best of my capabilities, try to perfect the record of that terrible event that turned the country around. The first book I completed, meaning in rough draft because that enabled me to turn to other work, is NEVER AGAIN! ⁱⁿ the sense that this should never happen in our country again. It could have appeared more than a ^{year} ago. I expect ^{it} to. I have been given no reason for delaying it that makes sense and the last word I had is that it is now scheduled for next ^{March}. Had it appeared when it easily could have the history of the outpouring of trash and worse than trash to "commemorate" the 30th JFK assassination anniversary ~~would~~, according to my history professor friends who gave it peer reviews and to my own belief, would have been different.

I did not begin with the intention of writing a book about Posner and his book. But the farther I got into it and the more attention it got changed my mind. What you may have seen as Case Open is but a butchered fraction of what I actually wrote. What was cut will add to the record for history.

Before his book appeared and probably before I ^{began} wrote NEVER AGAIN! I began work on what is now a long rough draft, Inside the JFK Assassination Industry. When I came ^{to} his blatant but disguised plagiarism from the faulty work of a boy, David Lui, which I remember ^{ed}, I decided to do ^{that} the book instead. Instead of only a chapter on it and him.

I refer too bluntly to the terrible record of book publishing in Inside so I do not plan to submit it to any publisher but I think that in the future there may be less reluctance to do blunt but factual writing on the subject and it may in the future be considered. It will in any ~~year~~ event be part of the record I leave for our history.

If you have seen Case Open the top line on the back cover is a faithful paraphrase of what the Department of Justice, representing the FBI, did tell the court in my CA 75-

226. I digress to tell you that was the first FOIA lawsuit filed under the amended Act and when the Act was amended it was the sole surviving Kennedy brother who saw to it that the legislative history would be clear. That suit in its earlier form was cited as requiring^{41P-} the amending of the investigatory files exemption.

I filed and in one way or another won more than a dozen FOIA lawsuits. I do have unique subject-matter knowledge. And I am alone in the middle position in the field, although the partisans of both sides will not agree. My work is almost 100% limited to the official evidence and there are no theories in any of it. This is why instead of taking my remaining time easy and enjoying some of the reading I was not able to do because of the intensity of my work I have continued with that work. ^{Posner knows he lies in referring to me as a "conspiracy theorist"}

I obtained, and like all others writing in the field, Gerald Posner had free and unsupervised access to all of it and to our copier, about a third of a million pages of once-withheld official records of the JFK and King assassinations. (I was James Earl Ray's investigator for a while. I conducted the successful habeas corpus investigation and the investigation for the evidentiary hearing we got for him that way. With the witnesses and evidence I produce that judge had to conclude that based on what was before him, "Ray's request for the trial he has never had, "guilt or innocence are immaterial.")

My own work product is extensive. It and all the official records will be a permanent free public archive at a fine small local college, Hood. It is still largely a women's college. There was no quid pro quo.

I begin Inside with an account of the learning experiences of a long life that qualified me for the work I've done, what cannot be taught and isn't. It is a rather pedestrian account. I do not intend it as an autobiography although to a limited extent it amounts to that. And then I go onto the a critique of the field in which I work.

Among those learning experiences was the non-publishing history of the first book on the Warren Commission. In it I am pretty certain I tell in more detail than above the S & S and Doubleday experiences I had and remember clearly and still appreciate.

I hope this old man's reminiscing does not waste your time.

I do not expect to hear further from R & H and Posner and Coomis have had four months to protest or complain. They have been silent.

I have not had a single letter from anyone I mention in my eight published books with any complaint of unfairness^{to them} or inaccuracy. Nor any phone call of that nature.

If it is the case, I can see that after ^{Posner} the book ^{was} published your people may well have assumed that it had had peer reviews and is other than it is. I have no criticism of your publishing it.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg
Harold Weisberg