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11/29/65

Dear Sol,

Your letter arrived Friday as we were leaving to spend the first weekend in a year with my family (all well). In the same mail was a letter from M.S. Dyeth, Managing editor of Harper's, which has committed itself to publish the Kennedy-subsidized Manchester book, buttressing the Warren Commission. An editor in a different department at Harpers had encouraged me to send him the book. He didn't read it because of Manchester. I wrote him and offered all my materials, pointing out that there is great hazard to both the Kennedy family (personal friendships with Cass Canfield, head of Harpers) and the publisher if there is a subsidization of a false book by the family. He may think I'm a nut.

Independently, two people had directed me to the Harpers salesman for this territory, an experienced man rather unlike a salesman; an intellectual. I gave him a copy Wednesday night. By last night he and his wife had both read it. He told me this morning that if I will permit him (as, of course, I did) he is calling Norton, which is represented by Harper's salesman, asking them to pick up the copy that might not yet have left Harpers. If it has left I'm to deliver a copy tomorrow. I'll be leaving for New York about 5 a.m. and may, if I can accomplish what I plan, return tomorrow night. His appraisal of the book is that it is "terrific". He is "very impressed". Both he and his wife were "quite excited" by it, and neither could "put it down". Her judgment has for many years been helpful to him in his business and she concurs in his opinion that this book has "excellent sales potential." He wrapped it all up by saying "you write very well".

Liz and I are both at the point where such praises no longer depress us, unless we are already feeling depressed for another reason. But how many times what I have just told you has happened I cannot begin to guess. There has yet to be a single adverse editorial comment on the book, and most have gone out of their way to praise it while turning it down.

Re: Ivan, if he can be sued, he is worth money personally (Astor's).

The stories you refer to are condensations of a pot-boiler by Sylvan Fox, who had been asked to write the book by Award Books, a paper-back outfit. He says the Commission is right but there are still questions, an approach that gets nowhere, has no reason to excite people or sales, and serves no useful purpose. This book has been entirely without reviews or comments and I fear, while hoping otherwise, that it will not see. That will hurt me more. The lone book, from which I pressed two weeks ago by Macmillan's editor, has appeared in England and will appear two months in paperback in the US. It is assumed to have escaped comment if this information is correct. I have no confirmation.

I have finished the draft of the next book "Oskar The Human Goose". It is a charming story, but I don't know about the book. I have never done that kind of writing and believe it requires a giftness I do not have. I plan to submit it in the next month or so. And that's about it. Thanks and best all around.

(actual books)

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SOL RABKIN

315 LEXINGTON AVENUE • SUITE 900

NEW YORK, N. Y. 10016

MURRAY HILL 9-7400

November 23, 1965

Mr. Harold Weisberg
Hyattstown, Maryland 20734

Dear Harold:

Thanks for your note concerning the shift of Ivan Obolensky from the publishing business to the selling of stock and bonds. What this means the Lord only knows. It may well be that Obolensky has sold out to someone else. In such case we would still have a possible suit. On the other hand, if he has abandoned the business, this would make the likelihood of successful suit somewhat less. Also if the business was not in fact incorporated, we could still sue Obolensky himself though I'm by no means sure that we would be able to enforce a judgment against him, assuming we got one.

The key thing is to get your MS published and get some income flowing in to you. If we do that, we can then not only establish damages in any suit against Obolensky or his firm but would also be in a position to handle the expenses of such litigation.

Incidentally, some recent issues of the New York World Telegram had a series of three articles based on a book by an editor of the New York World Telegram which discussed the flaws and shortcomings of the Warren Commission's investigation. I assume you've seen these. In any case, the next time you come into New York you might want to read them at the library.

I hope all is going well with you.

Sincerely,



Sol Rabkin

SR:mef

P.S. Is there anything new with Lil?