

4/21/73

Dear Walter,

After you read it, please return the enclosed New York Times story on the Hunt family fight. I didn't have time to read it until this morning, when I got up earlier than my usual early. I write without having time to think it through so I can get to other things that press upon me.

I have long been aware of what I call The Curse on me from my assassinations work. What I can't understand about it is that it extends to other materials and that it has normally first-rate business people in publishing afraid of everything I can deliver. This is an example of what could be both extremely profitable and socially useful. It could make one of the most attractive books in recent years.

Paul Rothermel has been a friend of mine for some years. The idea of the book was mine. In November 1968, when I detected signs of disenchantment, I suggested it and he said he'd let me know if he would do it. Thereafter he gave me a go-ahead by phone. I told him it would require a ghost and that I was not the one. As of the last time we discussed this, in December 1971, when Paul picked me up at Parkland Hospital after I had interviewed some of the doctors there, <sup>still had this authorization.</sup> We went to the Petroleum Club or the Texas Club, I've forgotten which, and sat and drank and talked for a couple of hours, about things of immediate interest to me. (I was then carrying some of my investigations forward, I add very successfully.)

There is something about me that the intellectuals and the party-line liberals, if the phrase is clear, do not understand. To a degree, I don't either. However, I can and do get the trust of conservatives who identify me as a liberal and who regard liberals generally as the enemy. Some of these people do become my friends. Some who I have never met in person do, too. Thus I have all the secret, inside Minuteman stuff from a network director of that extremist group. It makes The Anarchist's Cookbook ~~like~~ like a compendium of recipes for crepes suzettes. Last time I stayed in Dallas I was the house guest of a Minuteman member. My original introduction to Paul was through a far-right advertising and public-relations man I've still never met, a man turned on by my writing. He got in touch with H.L.Hunt, of all things, suggesting that Hunt hire me as his ghost. Paul responded with an invitation for me to visit. I had other interests in meeting Hunt, not becoming his ghost. (The old man himself asked me to do this in December 1971, when I walked in off the street and was ushered in without appointment or introduction. He remembered me. He is getting senile, though.)

I didn't want to go there empty-handed, so it was some time before I accepted the invitation. What made me think the time was right is something about which I have written you in connection with the Romero book.

Hinkle's account of what ultimately was titled Farewell America is deliberately dishonest and grossly incomplete. I blew that book earlier and the movie of the same name in December 1968. I got the last chapter in June of that year and the other two, in manuscript, in November. It was then that I decided to go to Dallas, for this was libelous in the extreme and delivering it to Hunt would be a favor to him.

I phoned Paul from New Orleans. He told me that in an hour there would be a ticket in my name at the Delta counter at Meissner Airport, that when I got to Dallas to go to the statue of the Texas Ranger at Love Field and he'd pick me up there. I was to let him know what plane I'd be on. Instead I went with Matt Herron, with whom I happened to be staying. Matt was going there to do pictures for a story John Pilger of the London Daily Mirror was writing on the anniversary of the JFK assassination. Instead of accepting the Hunt invitation, which included a hotel, I stayed with Matt and John and helped John with his story. I felt this made me less indebted to Hunt, but I now think it was a mistake. In any event, I gave Paul the complete Farewell America manuscript and he and the old man, as much as the old man is capable, appreciated it.

Paul and I established a relationship of mutual trust. Paul had been an FBI agent. He has done things for me and I have done things for him. He has fantastic connections among former agents. Among the things I did for him was to help him fend off requests for financial help made of the old man by dangerous extremists. If they were far-right, the miserly old bastard was a sucker for them. What was not in person or by phone is in my files.

In addition to being the confidential adviser, which Paul was, he was also Hunt's chief of personal security. I think this probably extended to the corporations, too. He had the office next to the old man's at 1401 Elm Street. There are no Hunt secrets Paul does not have, especially personal secrets and extending to the two very dangerous senior sons. One of them, I think the sportsman but I'm not sure, has a virtual private army, if I recall correctly. The active Wallace man in Waldron's story.

After Paul could take it no longer, these two moved in on the old man and have since controlled him pretty completely. If I had made an appointment to see him last time I was there, it would not have happened. But as I figured, the receptionist and the secretary remembered me and the favor I had done, and they walked me right in. All the old man is permitted to do by those two is play around with his cosmetics business. He has had special plastic bags, something like Bantam gives away at ABA, printed up. One side advertises these cosmetics and the other his right-wing propaganda. He insisted that I leave with a bag full of his propaganda, including perhaps a dozen books, and he was short with the secretary who brought them to him in a brown paper bag. It had to be the one <sup>with</sup> which I'd be walking down the street advertising him! This man of fabled wealth is also so cheap that his little propaganda slips are printed on inexpensive paper with absolutely no margins and cut to fit the text. I still have almost all this junk. I went from Dallas to Wisconsin to speak at a university. The kids wanted souvenirs, so most of these small snippets of wasted paper are gone. Can you imagine a man of this wealth being so miserly and bothering himself with such details? It is his true character. He even had his second wife and their kids stand on street-corners and hawk his propaganda books. I think the one setting forth his strange beliefs is called Ed Dorado.

There was a time before Paul quit when my relations were so good I got Colonel Bob Gastory (remember him from my second book and Oswald in New Orleans?) hired as their Washington representative.

The very strange man who in his dotage is a Puritan was a frontier-type brawler, gambler and whorejumper. His youth is quite a story. His success is not due to hidden genius. It is straight luck in gambling. There is no hidden talent as one sometimes finds in the uneducated. He gambled his way to success, in cards and in options. At 84 he towered over me, so I can imagine what he was as a fighting youngster.

There is really a story here. Paul did authorize me to represent him and it. Frankly, aside from my connection, I can't understand why Mark would not go for this, picking out his own writer. It should make a movie, another Citizen Kane, as I believe I've suggested to you before. If there is interest, Paul has many phones, some listed under his wife's name. Paul is junior. He has a son of the same name who lives in the same large suburban home, in Richardson, a Dallas suburb. The phones I used to call are AD1-6669 and 235-5191.

In going to my file to get his mail address (2406 Little Creek Drive, Richardson 75080) I find that you did propose this before. Bob Silverstein said a great subject but who knows if this fellow's friend can deliver the goods. Marc's attitude then was 50-50. Well, this story ought answer the question, can Paul deliver. That was in early 1972. Paul is back in extremely confidential investigations with Denson, the man Belli used in the Ruby case. In Dallas, that is a lucrative business. Paul also practises law.

This really ought to go. Would you please try again? If there is no interest, would you do me this favor: John Starr was my agent years ago. I have lost track of him. Would you please phone him about this and if he'd like it, send him a copy of this letter? Thanks.

P.S. I wrote the letter beginning about 5 a.m., as I said, without thinking it through. Later, after the morning paper came, I read something that triggered some recollection. It seems, as I remember it, that you were supposed to go to Texas for some kind of meeting or convention, perhaps of an educational nature? Anyway, I thought it would be a good idea if you could talk to him before approaching Marc. If this was before the Clifford Irving deal, I realized there might be a question of bona fides. So, having other things to raise with him, I asked if he would see you if you had time and interest. Enclosed is his response. It is the last paragraph.

I can date this by the second paragraph. That is a reference to the meeting with Hunt I report above. So, it would be not too long after December 1971. The old man, who in a business sense is entirely the captive of the sons, had made some comments about Paul. He had also done an odd thing, asked me to call Paul from his private phone, one that does not go through their switchboard. It is located on a small room off Hunt's private office, next to a sort of hospital bed he has there, so he could use it from that bed.

The rest of this may interest you. I was looking for one black former FBI agent in particular. He had made an indirect approach to me in which he was identified by an initial only. After that approach, he had backed off. I presumed this was because some kind of surveillance picked it up and he got some flak. All of these things immaterial to the purpose of this letter should be confidential. Anyway, Paul did come up with the right guy, correct name, present employment, etc. When I see you I'll tell you the rest of the story. It will interest you.

In any event, the concluding paragraph makes interest in publication clear enough, as it also does his willingness to talk, initially in confidence.

I would like to believe the potential of the true story of this very odd perhaps richest man in the world, where fidelity would permit movie scenes more explicit than *Lattfango* and physical violence like that of old wild-west movies, is enough to make ~~some~~ someone believe it might be worth the slight cost of Paul and me meeting with him in New York.

I have not heard the date of my speech from the college as of yesterday's mail. Today's has not yet come. If today's mail includes that date, I'll add it so you'll know when I'll be up.