

1/21/92

Mr. Matt Smith
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Dear Matt,

Your behavior when you phoned yesterday was terrible. It had bad consequences for me. Among the reasons for my writing is to assure you that there will be no repetition of it. If there is, I will hang up promptly.

You asked about the state of my health, I told you, you were utterly oblivious, and you were entirely indifferent when I told you that I was engaged in my own writing and was ^{fatigued} in it by innumerable interruptions mostly from the media. Not long after we spoke ABC-TV's "Nightline" interviewed me by phone and it is to be here at 9:30 this morning to tape me. Thanks to you I will be less able to do well because, quite exceptional as it is, I was not able to sleep, the unthinking, selfish, self-important and unreasonably demanding ^{NATURAL} of your call coming continuously to mind.

Your agent, you said, wants you to add something about Oliver Stone to your book. I told you what I can provide. I also told you that because "I" and I are so busy we did not want to waste the time it would require, so I asked that you ask your agent if what I offered might be what he wants. Several times you refused to do this, without what I sought repeatedly, some explanation of this. To me this is incomprehensible.

As you know, we are nearing 80, have more to do than we can do, and in trying to keep up, as we cannot, do not even get enough rest. As I told you, this is tax season for Lil and she has already been required by new health problems to discontinue serving some of her old clients. I told you that the media inquiries were dominating my life and making it close to impossible for me to write at all. I did not tell you that Lil has book orders from last week stacked for me to package and ship. But I did tell you that I was then in the middle of writing a new beginning for a condensation of all my JFK books. Whether this nor anything else made a whit of difference to you. All that is important to you is your own book and you are so impressed with its importance that nothing else is of any importance to you in the lives and work of others. You even took a considerable amount of time trying again to persuade me to write a foreword to your book - sight unseen at that - after I had made as clearly as possible that I would not.

With regard to the data I offered you for the Stone addition to your book, when I told you several times that neither Lil nor I could really take the time to search those records out and copy them you persisted while steadfastly refusing to ask your own agent whether it would satisfy the need he sees. Or for that matter whether he might believe it could enhance the value of your book. If you have any reason for this I could not elicit it and I tried repeatedly. To me this is incomprehensible. So I offered to have the student who helps me part-time do the searching and copying for you in a few days when she returns

from her mid-term break. You said that would be too late. You even asked that instead of placing this material in our box with our other mail that I drive it into town, to the post office. And this when I had told you several times that I am overwhelmed and can't begin to do what I must as well as what I want very much to do.

To hell with my writing is your attitude. All that is important is your writing and your whims and beliefs that others simply must share.

As you know, one of the side ~~f~~ effects of open-heart surgery is an inability to remain asleep. You know from having been here that I cannot avoid getting up too early and therefore must get to bed earlier in order to get some rest, less than I should get. I was delayed in retiring by the Nightline interview followed by several more calls. When I do put my head on the pillow almost without exception I am asleep immediately. Most nights I awake once from need and return to sleep again immediately. *Not /as4 night!*

I believe I told you when you were here that while once I thrived on excitement and relished face-to-face controversy over my work or the subject matter, in recent years I have not been able to handle excitement and try to avoid it. As soon as I laid head to pillow last night your call came to mind and for several hours I could not get it out of mind and could not fall asleep. When about three hours later I was able to doze off, it interrupted my sleep and it was of poor quality and entirely inadequate. At my age and in the state of my health this is bad and I will have no more of it.

It was close to midnight when I did doze off. Lil was still working at her desk, having been occupied until 2 p.m. with her sister's medical needs. So, I sure as hell will not ask her to take time to search and copy the records I offered you. When I can't begin to just keep up despite very long hours for one of my age and health problems, and particularly given the selfish, inconsiderate and unreasonable attitude you reflected, I will not. And because you said that when the student is here again in a couple of days that will be too late, there is no point in wasting her time for which I do have other uses and needs. In short, for these reasons I'll not be sending you what I offered you.

It is one thing, Matt, for us to be impressed with the importances we see in our own work but it is quite another thing to demand that others see these importances whether or not they do and then to make imperious demands on others without the slightest consideration of the conditions and needs of their own lives. You are, of course, entitled to have the belief you make clear in your own book. I have the right I have made clear, not to agree with you on this. And having made clear that I will not write a foreword for it with my reasons I do not welcome ~~you~~ ^{your} taking more of my time in trying to talk me into doing what I have made so clear I will not do. No matter how politely you do this it provokes me and wastes that much more of the time that remains to me. No matter how politely you persisted in your unexplained refusal to consult with your agent or publisher before putting us to what could waste time for us and taking that much time from what we must do, that and your demand that we do what you want immediately, the hell with our needs, is very bad behavior and the kind of selfishness and thoughtlessness I would not have expected of you. In any event, please see to it that there is nothing like a repetition. Best wishes, *hald*

I wrote the preceeding pages beginning at 2:30 a.m., typing with the one of my fingers, all the tips of which are cracked, that is not too painful to use. This is not an appeal for sympathy. It is a reality with which I live and try to work, slowing me down as it does. I'll continue trying to give you ~~and~~ understanding until the ABC-TV "Nightline" crew is here. It is due soon.

You know from personal experience how willing I am to help others even when I do not agree with what I know they will write. You also know from personal observation that I am limited in what I am able to do and that I am weak and tire easily. You know also that our lives are dominated by medical needs that take much time. As of only the second day of the week I have seven medical appointments, all requiring travel time and three taking two hours each, physical therapy. You know ~~that~~ that before daylight I do my daily walking therapy. Then there are trips for prescriptions and today one for an appliance, the belt that holds the anti-embolism hose. ^{up!} The one I was wearing yesterday broke when Lil was on two medical appointments with her post-operative sister. I could not undertake to repair it without her, she did not return until after 2 and then the phone made it impossible for me to ~~undisrobe~~ and make the repair until after supper. All that time the hose were maladjusted and impaired rather than improving circulation. (I am surprised surprised that I did not lose my temper during your call, particularly when I was trying to get a word edged in and you refused to stop talking to listen.) I have a minimum of six medical appointments weekly. So, what time I have for my own work and other interests is severely limited every week. When you had some knowledge of the realities of my life, I believe that if you had stopped to think of anything other than your own interests you would have realized that continuing to argue with me over the foreword I had refused to write and your refusal to even make the slight effort to determine whether the time it would take for me to search, copy and send the Stone material you nonetheless insisted you need immediately amounts to selfishness, thoughtlessness and abuse.

I do not for a minute believe that you intended any of this but it also should be apparent to you that if you had given any thought to anything but your personal interest you would have been aware. You were not.

So far as I am concerned this matter is now closed. If you feel that an apology is called for, it is not and please do not take any time for it.

But I do ask that if there is any further communication between us you please keep the realities of my life in mind, avoid any waste of the limited time I have and in particular do not argue with me after I have made my mind up and have made this clear,

If you do not, there will be no further relationship. #