

copies Daughen, Roffman ^{JW}

2/16/73

Mr. George Hall, vice president
Little, Brown & Co.
34 Beacon St.,
Boston, Mass. 02106

Dear Mr. Hall,

A student who is outraged at Arlen Specter's threat against you has sent me a copy of Joseph R. Daughen's article in the Philadelphia Bulletin of the 13th. I have no personal knowledge of the O'Donnell incident but I have countless cases of exactly that which he charges, including by that poseur Specter, whose record is in some respects worst in this regard.

Specter has altered testimony, and I have the proof, in writing. He has suborned perjury. I charged this in my second book and dared him to sue me. When he was silent I went to Philadelphia and in public appearances repeated my personal charges, said that if they were not true there were libellous, and again dared him to sue me. He has been silent. So, don't worry about his suing you now.

In fact, I have carried my work much farther, to where it is so "hot" I think it is commercially unpublishable. I have the evidence Specter suppressed and it is quite opposite what he adduced. Naturally, I am not anxious to give it away and throw away the enormous effort it represents. But if Specter does sue you, I will let you have what you might need in your and O'Donnell's defense.

Please understand that I am not talking about what somebody told me. I am talking about official government records that were suppressed, and the initial responsibility for the suppression is Specter's. These records are in my possession. I got them all properly. They include what the Warren Commission did not have. They include some of Specter's own memoranda that he expected to be permanent secrets. Specter was pretty sharp about leaving records he could later cite in self-justification, but he did not anticipate that a devil loving scripture would ever get them. And they are not self-justification. They are self-indictment when added to the other secret records I have.

I am not sending you these records without knowing you have need for them because this work has been bankrupting. You may recall your own consideration of my first book in 1965. The attitude has not changed and is not yours alone. I can understand it if I do not like it because I have been subjected to more serious pressures than this from Specter to you. So, I just can't afford the nominal expense. It is for this reason that I am unfamiliar with the O'Donnell-Powers book except from review. They indicate the inclusion of confirmation of other of my early work, on a different subject than the assassination. However, I will, if you need them let you have copies. If you would prefer, O'Donnell or Powers, or one of your people, perhaps Sions, who read my first book, can come here and see everything relevant I have. I don't know how serious this is to you or whether Specter will really be nutty enough to sue. It would ruin him. It should be enough to get him disbarred, but that never happens in such cases, of which I have a number.

Should you desire to accept this offer, we are but an hour from Baltimore or Washington and can provide accommodations, including copying facilities and a bed.

I would appreciate it if you would forward a copy of this letter to Mr. O'Donnell. If he is ever near here, I would like very much to meet with him. There are many things I think he would like to know. I will ask nothing of him except the preservation of my confidence. The invitation includes Mr. Powers, but some of what I have in mind will mean more to Mr. O'Donnell, who was personally involved in what happened in ways I am certain he neither knows nor has any way of knowing.

2/16/73

Dear Howard,

Thanks for sending me Daughen's piece and your note of the 13th. If I am not mistaken, I spoke to Daughen the night I dared Specter to sue me when I was going to speak at the Suburban synagogue. That may not be its exact name. A former schoolmate, Dave Salsburg, who has the Paperback Bookstore in Ardmore asked me to speak there and will recall my daring Specter and predicting he'd be silent. I know I called the Bull before I spoke. It may also be that Jack McKinney was there that night. Anyway, you understated, because you forgot my personal correspondence with Specter after his appearance on the CBS Videowhitesashes.

I'm sorry the appearance of my letter to Hall is so bad. I was given some old carbon sets and they sometimes don't work well in my portable. However, I'm much too busy now to retype it so I'm mailing it as it is. I don't want them to knuckle more than they have, or downplay the book.

In fairness to yellow publishers, defending a spurious lawsuit can be very costly. It cost me \$5,000 to get a spurious lawsuit by those nutty Cubans thrown out of court. The night Percy Foreman fled the New York TV studio with his makeup on when he learned he was to confront me he threatened the station before anything was said and terrified them. They delayed the taping an hour and a half, begged me not to mention his name, and went into elaborate detail on what such a spurious suit could cost them. They were so afraid they rigged a second show against me for the following week, just to keep Percy happy, and were going to keep me off of it until I threatened to use some coming radio time to call for black picket lines around their studios. So, the threat of suit alone is a real worry. It can cost like hell to win a certain victory.

Let me give you some advice you don't have to take. Unless it can help you make some arrangements for your book, stay out of this in any way that Specter would learn about. Buck it all to me. I have much more than you anyway and can't be hurt as you can be. You can be hurt more than I was at your age because I didn't have a scholarship. A prof got fired because he refused to flunk me on the college president's order after I reported what the president didn't like reported, his friendliness to Hitler. He came storming into the paper, the city editor shooed me into a toilet until he left, and when he got no satisfaction from the paper he went to work on me where he was boss. If you feel otherwise and want me to stay out, I will, but I really do think that unless there can be something in it for you, like making a chance for your book, which is possible, you should be very careful. I bear too many scars to be concerned about myself and as you know, I've survived many such affairs.

You show no awareness of something I think you should consider, why Specter did so crazy a thing when he knows some of what I have on him. Do you think that a man with his experience is unaware of what can happen to him in such a suit? He knows it would be publicized and he can't think for a minute that after repeatedly daring him to sue me I'd not rush to the aid of anyone he sued where I do have what is relevant. It is probable that his sole purpose was self-justification and intimidation. However, like all his former colleagues in that obscenity, he is galled by what he did, and it might drive him to foolish acts. If the latter is true, he can be a very dangerous man, particularly because he is in a position of power.

Recognize the distinction between fear and care. Don't be afraid. Be careful.

Please keep me posted, including with clips. If I hear from Hall, I'll send you a copy. Note that I did not use this as an excuse to offer them any of my work.

cc; Daughen

Best,

Route 8, Frederick, Md. 21701
2/16/73

Dear Mr. Daughen,

Enclosed are copies of my today's letters to Little, Brown and Howard Roffman about Specter's threat to sue over the O'Donnell-Powers book. Although it is possible, I don't think Specter is serious about suing. I think he wanted a bit of comfort in facing himself and a thing he could talk about. He knows he has done much worse than O'Donnell said and that I can prove it.

My concern about Howard is genuine. He is a fine young man, as fine as ~~any~~ ^{any} I've known and probably brighter (I'm not carboning him on this). I feel about him as I would a son. He visits here often and goes through my materials freely.

I do think any public attention on this could hurt him. He has bearded Specter twice, face-to-face, to my knowledge. Once in Specter's office, once when Specter spoke at Penn. Howard then took the audience away from Specter and had it booing him. There was an incident when some of Specter's bodyguards came up to Howard afterwards. And I rather suspect that if nothing did happen, Howard's folks would be frightened and worried, as they have been in the past.

I also seek no attention. However, if it serves a constructive purpose, I would not run from it.

How much Specter knows about what I know about him I don't know. Federal surveillance on me has been fairly extensive. I've got carbon copies of some of it and substantial evidence of more. I've finally decided to try to do something about it, but until it comes to pass I want nothing said about it. I still have an agent in England and I've queried him and I've just written the ACLU to see if they'd be interested in taking the case. I've also sued the FBI a couple of times. The first got me a summary judgement and the information I sought and the second is right now before an appeals court. I think I'm going to win that one, too, and I fear that any public attention to it will pressure the judges more than the situation does. I'm happy that it has been entirely unreported and want it to remain that way, pending decision. I know the feds know what I've got and how I got it. I don't know if they've told Specter. I'm inclined to think they may have, in their own interest.

My letter to Little, Brown refers to official documentation only. I've also interviewed ^{ed} a number of witnesses Specter handled for the Warren Commission and asked them the questions he didn't. That book is completed, but commercially the subject is still a taboo, as Howard is learning, and for all practical purposes is commercially dead. The campaign to destroy the credibility of criticism of the official mythology about the JFK assassination has succeeded, aided in no small part by the excesses, insanities and stupidities of the dedicated wrong among the critics. So, the man decent people in publishing, like Jerry Sions, can't do anything in the face of policy decisions that now, unlike the past, have commercial validity.

I call the book to which I refer POST MORTEM. It has many targets, but Specter is the bulls-eye of each not because I am out to get him but because he did what I write about. I don't think you will find a more definitive or less contradictable work of non-fiction. If you have need to know what it says and proves, Howard can tell you. I do ask that confidentiality be preserved for many reasons all important to me. If you want to discuss it with me, I think it would be wise to have Howard on an extension for he may recall what I forget. And thanks for the good reporting. Sincerely,

Did Specter Ask JFK Aide to Alter Warren Report Stand? DA Denies It

2/13/73

by JOSEPH R. DAUGHEN
Of The Bulletin Staff

A top aide to the late President John F. Kennedy has charged that District Attorney Arlen Specter tried to get him to change sworn testimony he had given to the Warren Commission investigating the President's assassination.

At the time of the incident, in July 1964, Specter was a staff attorney with the Warren Commission.

Specter today vehemently denied the charge. He threatened to sue for libel.

Kenneth P. O'Donnell, who was Mr. Kennedy's appointments secretary and personal confidante, first made the charge in a book about the President, "Johnny, We Hardly Knew Ye."

He and David F. Powers, another close friend of Mr. Kennedy's, wrote the book with Joe McCarthy.

Identifies by Name

In the first printing of the book, O'Donnell identified Specter by name and said that Specter wanted him to change his testimony because it conflicted with a statement made by the late President Lyndon B. Johnson.

Specter protested to the publisher, Little, Brown and

Co., of Boston. In subsequent printings, the description of the incident remained the same but Specter's name was deleted.

"We didn't think it was that important," O'Donnell told The Bulletin. "I believe he

protested to the publisher, and the publisher felt it was not important enough to get into a fight over it."

'Not Important'

Was Specter's name deleted because the reference to him
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Specter Denies JFK Aide Charge

Continued From First Page

was inaccurate or because it was not important? O'Donnell was asked.

"It was deleted because it's not important," O'Donnell said.

Does that mean he is standing by the charge? O'Donnell was asked.

"I'll stand by what I've said," he replied. "It's a controversy we don't need. The book is selling very well. It's a book about the President, and in that context, Specter is just not very important."

Testimony Concerns

The testimony O'Donnell referred to concerned Mr. Johnson's use of Air Force One to fly back to Washington from Dallas after the assassination. This became a sore point with some Kennedy loyalists who thought Mr. Johnson should have traveled on Air Force Two while Mrs. Kennedy used the presidential aircraft to bring her husband's body home.

Subsequently, Mr. Johnson told the Warren Commission that O'Donnell told him to use Air Force One. O'Donnell testified he had never discussed the matter with Mr. Johnson.

In the initial version of the book, O'Donnell described the situation this way:

"I distinctly remember that when Johnson and I talked at the hospital there was no mention of which of the two planes he should use. Nor was there any mention that he was considering waiting for Jackie and the President's casket to be on the same plane with him before he left Dallas. Later a lawyer for the Warren Commission, Arlen Specter,

pointed out to me that Johnson's testimony that I had told him to board Air Force One disagreed with my own testimony before the commission about our conversation at the hospital.

"Specter asked me, to my amazement, if I would change my testimony so that it would agree with the President's. 'Was I under oath?' I asked Specter, as, of course, I was. 'Certainly I wouldn't change anything I said under oath.'"

Second Version:

The second version of the book says:

"Later a lawyer for the Warren Commission pointed out to me that Johnson's testimony that I had told him to board Air Force One disagreed with my own testimony before the commission about our conversation at the hospital.

"He asked me, to my amazement, if I would change my testimony so that it would agree with the President's. 'Was I under oath?' I asked him, as, of course, I was. 'Certainly I wouldn't change anything I said under oath.'"

Specter's Letter

Last Dec. 18, Specter wrote to Little Brown & Co., saying of O'Donnell's assertions:

"I never asked him to do such a thing. I have discussed this matter with Mr. (Norman) Redlich, who was with me during the entire session with Mr. O'Donnell. Mr. Redlich has confirmed the fact that I made no request of Mr. O'Donnell to change his testimony."

Redlich was an assistant counsel with the Warren Commission and is now corpora-

tion counsel for the City of New York.

Publisher's Reply

On Dec. 26, Little Brown's vice president and treasurer, George Hall, replied to Specter saying:

"We have checked again with Mr. O'Donnell and have been assured that he considers these passages to be accurate. However, in consideration of your wishes, we have deleted your name from these passages from the new printing, which goes on press this week."

In an interview, Specter said it was impossible for O'Donnell's charge to be true. He said he examined O'Donnell May 13, 1964, two months before Mr. Johnson gave his statement. Specter said that was the only occasion on which he has ever seen O'Donnell.

Specter also said he was not satisfied by simply having his name deleted from the book since the description of the incident remains.

"I will not let the matter rest at this point," Specter said. "Little Brown & Co. has not honored its commitment to delete the incident from the book."

2/13/73, 6:10 pm

When I saw the Bulletin story tonight re Specter by Joseph Daughen, I called the bulletin and asked to speak with Daughen, who was in. We spoke for about 15 minutes, and he seemed quite interested. I told him I'd just read his story and didn't know what kind of a follow-up he planned, but that I had some info which I thought would be of interest to him re Specter and WC. I told him I had written a book on the assass and that the original version dealt with Specter in part and that the first pub I sent it to was Little Brown, in summer of '71. I told him the nature of the charges against specter, including subornation of perjury-- he asked in whose testimony, and I said that of the autopsy docs. I told him that the same thing happened to Weisberg in '65 with Little Brown, and I added that the most comprehensive research has been done by Weisberg. Daughen remembered Weisberg, said he had spoken to him on numerous occasions. He asked what I thought he should do, and I told him that if he wanted a first-rate briefing on Specter and WC he should get in touch with Weisberg. He said he would, although he is busy the rest of the week. I gave him Harold's number.

He said he saw no reason to doubt O'Donnell's version, and I told him that Specter's defense as stated in the article was no defense at all, to which he readily agreed. He said that Little Brown is his publisher (he called Sions "a first rate guy") and said they are very much afraid of libel suits, and that when he contacted them about this for the story, they were really up-tight and didn't want a controversy made over it. He pointed out to me that the change which O'Donnell made actually libeled every staff lawyer for the WC because there was no way one could now tell that it was Specter who tried to get him to change his testimony. He said that as of the time O'D testified, it was common knowledge that LBJ said what he did about AF I, because he was telling his friends that story, and that he could easily imagine an aspiring democrat to abide by the wishes as expressed even casually by a dem. president. He called Specter's bit about using Redlich to back him up "a lot of shit," and I agreed, since Redlich was witness only to the taking of the testimony.

He asked me my name, number, and the title of my book. He said there was only so much a newspaper could do, but that he would like to make this public. I told him that I was moved to call because Specter had made an issue of suing for libel. I told him of Weisberg's repeated challenges to Specter to sue him if anything he wrote or said about him wasn't true, and Specter never responded. We both agreed that Specter made the libel threat now only to scare little Brown.

I learned of the story from my parents who got the 2-star Northeast edition. They read it to me over the phone. I went out and got the 2-star and the 3-star Metropolitan editions. The 2-star ed. here did not carry the story, and the 3-star had a different version than the one my parents read me. Basically it was the same. But mine deletes a section where Specter explains that he took O'D's test. before LBJ submitted his statement.

(Harold--the attacked copy is from the 3-star edition)

HR