

Dear Mr. Stamm,

2/21/74

It again is not my intention to give offense nor to put down but I cannot accept the piety, pseudo-scholars' approach and moral and ethical presumptions nor the other pretense of your letter of the 20th. Please understand, as one my senior should without difficulty, that I do not being work at 4 a.m. to indulge what to me is the idle curiosity or personal ambitions of other, regardless of their evaluations of what I so designate.

A soldier in Washington is no less a soldier than one under bombing in a foxhole. Each can serve a useful function. But how do you think the soldier in the forefront feels when he is asked to answer letters that can serve no function in the battle in which he is engaged? I got up at 4 this morning, as is my custom and with only a little more than four hours of sleep, to wage battle in court for the suppressed evidence I seek. This is far from the first time. There has been no time at which any of those calling themselves "critics" have been helpful in any way save for two of the young. None of the seniors. Two students, none of real maturity or any means. I do not have the filing fees. Nor do I ask them of others. When it is necessary to increase my debt, increase it. From the work I ~~have~~ have done this debt has soared to \$35,000, a not inconsiderable problem for a man who has had no income for a decade. So spare me the lectures on proprietary rights. Unless, of course, when you were engaged in producing "truth" when you worked on labor matters and refused any compensation and simultaneously were penniless.

You go to doctors and lawyers for what you call "truth." Do you refuse to pay their bills because you regard truth with the self-serving sophistries of your first graft? Including as you there specify, "including even theft?"

The cement-finisher and the carpenter and the steel-worker serve useful purposes in bright construction. They may have the finest intellects and other capabilities. Yet they are not the engineers who design the structures they build. The difference is in the preparation and ultimately in the understanding, not the natural endowment. You may find the comparisons ego-tripping but that concerns me little for I deal with realities not childish deceptions guised a lofty principle and I do not believe it is the obligation of the engineer to halt his work to explain the results of engineering to the carpenter. Nor do I think the completion of the structure justifies it.

Truth is not an abstraction. East of all is it in political contexts and even less when the greatest power in history is opposed to it and to having it established. You pontificate in meaningless abstractions. You may fart into a windstorm and that farting may do you some personal good but it does not deter the wind. Nor make any appreciable addition to it.

The production of this isolated "truths" as you call them has yet to serve a single meaningful end. Take Sylvia's superb job on Belin in The Texas Observer. It was up to her usual magnificent level. But it was foredoomed to do nothing good and to attract the counterproductive. This is no ex post facto conclusion, as you can easily learn. Or take what Cyril did and more, what inevitably was done with it, both predictable and predicted. I was twice solicited to make new application. Back in 1966 I was the first. The Archivist and GSA both beseeched me in writing. As I sought to warn Cyril what the inevitable result would be, hardly truth, I refused to be so misused myself. Howard Roffman was here when Fred Graham phoned me before all of this. I accurately and in the finest detail forecast what would happen and even how he would play the story. There is not even a slight error or miscalculation in what I clearly saw. You may be one of the "get Kennedys" cabal who also regard this as "truth" as they do justice. I am not and I remain completely persuaded it buried truth a bit more and exculpated the guilty.

And quite aside from this Cyril was typically but utterly and completely professionally incompetent. When I was denied this primary evidence I spent more time and effort than the acquisition of ten doctorates would take to accomplish the same end by other means and I have done this with more definitiveness than what Cyril saw enables. I have the book entirely completely. It was on this that I solicited editorial assistance, including from those you hold dear, and was rejected. Now that the 600 pages are done and I lack the means of getting them retyped were they edited, offering editing amount to no more, regardless of what I can assume to be decent and honorable intent, than a means of getting access to



to what you have not been able to do with your own wit and intelligence. And what I do not hide from you, I know you have enjoyed a friendly relationship, one of trust, with the most unscrupulous and sick rascals whose characters you have not been able to detect or willing to face. Right now some of my other work is being defended from theft for commercial purpose by one of these. Is it in the interest of "truth" that a crook without the knowledge be paid for the work done by me, with the knowledge I acquired in doing the work? Are you describing truth and moral and ethical obligations are paying a crook for the work of a man who goes unpaid for years of the most painful and costly labor?)

You really know nothing of me or my unpublished work. You know nothing of my practises. I do still, despite the most painful experiences, make my files available to others. I do not control what they select and I can't take the time to keep records of what they borrow. The record of return has been shameful. My files have been decimated. For the longest time I made what to me were costly and time-consuming copies of everything I got on my own to those I then trusted. Each copy cost me 20¢ to begin with and an addition 14¢ with my equipment, plus a time that was exhorbitant, a minute for each page plus collation, and I did this free. No doubt invent and will it into reality for it is utter falsehood, the unjustified assumption without which you could not argue at all. When you consider the thousands of pages with which I did this and consider my circumstances, it was a major sacrifice. But to this day I can attribute no single benefit to any of us from my having done this very simply because once we got past what we could dredge from the 26 there was almost none with the ability to go further. You may feel that a constructive propose is accomplished for you in contemplating you navel but I strongly dispute your right to impose that judgement on me. Unless you know where my work has carried me you are without basis for holding any opinion on the merit of your own. I would like to persuade you that you are engaged in a futility but I think you would find the effort unwelcome and I have learned from the bitterest experiences that I must follow the course I have too late decided upon.

You have no idea the number of critics who have been here, seen what I have and what has happened to what I let other have, and have berated me for sharing.

Surely there is a need for getting truth out. But that does not get limited to nor is it in any way advanced by my giving away the uncompensated labor of ten years, in part paid for by bankruptcy and the deplorably conditions of sub-subsistence existence this has imposed, say, on my innocent wife. If there are those who have this great and ennobling dedication a) to truth and b) to its availability, then I suggest that the way in which they can accomplish it is obvious and not by theft.

You know the business of walking a mile in the other Indian's moccasins. You haven't done it. Nor can you be aware of what has happened when I have done what you want of me.

Truth is not an abstraction. We do not live in a vacuum. Truth without context is nothing. Isolated truths without overwhelming support at this juncture not only mean nothing but the use and what concerns me more from experience the misuse is inevitably and unvaryingly counterproductive. It kills that little part of truth that gets known, it prepared the counteroffensive, which is the part that gets wide attention. I cite the inspiration to *Selin* and the *Times'* treatment, which reached more than the book, as a minor example.

What you have really asked of me is a moral, ethical and intellectual outrage and if you could separate yourself from your lust you would recognize it. In part your lack of knowledge, which seems to be outside your awareness, accounts for your lack of recognition of the fact that you are virtually asking me to write a special book just for you and then be content if you go in for some fairies and needles stuff based on it.

You are persuaded. You don't keep this "truth" for your understanding. But if you have it, what the hell are you going to do with it? Play with it as a miser does with his gold? I hold the complete and rounded work for a moment when the overall truth can be made available. I do not equate prone with sex nor do I equate sex with love. I do not equate an isolated fact that may be impressive to the persuaded with a major accomplishment, a means of in anyway establishing the truth in the real sense.

But on ~~some~~ moral, ethical philosophical and any other ground you may elect I strongly deny that you or anyone else has the right to steal an isolated fact from an enormous completed work use it out of context or without the necessary context, and tell me this is



right, proper, justice or anything else like them

You have an ego involvement in this you should face like a man. You believe that the trivialities of the past with which you toy are today significant. Only abysmal ignorance, in the context of what can be known and you have not been able to learn, can lead you to believe this. And I strongly deny you the right on an additional ground to ruin major work for this indulgence. It would hurt, not help truth even as you see truth.

I have court papers to prepare with a close deadline, so I won't continue this further. I ask you to assess your own morals and ethics rather than attempt to sit in judgement on mine for the serving of your own selfish and in the overall meaningless purposes. You do have a right to go for the fairies and needles jazz but you do not have the right to impose that standard on me.

I have never asked anyone for a penny, including you in the last letter you seem to misinterpret, consistent with the nature of your appeal and with what I believe to be other misrepresentations. I can't take the time to reread that stuff. I take this time only to try to get you to get yourself in perspective and your demands in some reasonable context. Before addressing these specifics, I jump to another possibility for those who have this purist dedication to truth and establishing fact. Some of us are of enormous wealth. We can produce the work I have done and make it available to all who might want it. In full, not with some toy of individual evidence upon which you have fixed and for which you lust. I have not asked this. But it would cost these wealthy one virtually nothing. Their egos not stinginess is the reason they do not make the offers. One who did, by the way, asserted the absolute right to change fact and doctrine and to convert the work into an attack on his personal enemies. If you serious long for truth to be known, you have the alternative of seeking to arrange for the total availability of a work of some 600 pages of the length you know. Not just an individual resurrection from what had been kept from the Commission and the Archives. When you do not elect this alternative you abdicate any right to lecture me on giving you anything for your idle pursuit of minor papers.

May I add that quite to the contrary of you ignorant and self-serving basic assumptions I have actively seeking to arrange for the converting of 100% of my files into a university archive and within the past month have been actively engaged upon this on two fronts? So the deductions with which you guide yourself around the moral and ethical horror you have to circumvent to be content with yourself and your positions are fictions. You arrogate to yourself the judgement that through you this "truth" will become our sword of justice.

Enlightening you: were I willing to get up at four a.m. and sleep but four hours and starve my wife and clothe her in the threadbare and turn the furnace off entirely when she is not home and set it at 62 when she is, I would still face the choice between informing an uninformed individual and spending that time in work to which he does not devote himself. I have no problem making the choice. It is your ego, not mine, that is involved, regardless of your wordings.

I do not assert a proprietary right to what you subvert into "truth." I do assert and henceforth will in court if necessary the right to the sweat of my own brow, the fruit of my own labor, that for which I have bankrupted us. Your pretending that this truth is something else defames your mind and principles. You cannot avoid the fact that this is my work and that I am entitled to it and that I have from the first, which goes back to 1966, I was that far ahead of others, actively sought publication.

If after all of this you were capable of shame you would hide your face after accusing me of "precisely what the American government did through the Warren Commission." Is that what I did in mortgaging myself to bring Whitewash out? Or the books that followed, for which I still owe the printer? This is obscene, spetgenarian moralist. And if I had been hiding it, would it have been stolen, that one thing you seek?

You are a knave to lecture me as you do on Nixon and the Watergate. Have you any idea of what I have been doing? Have you any idea of the efforts I have made to GIVE my original work on this way? Or the refusal of the media to use it. I can show you dozens of major stories they all feared to touch. Two that have since come out, each by accident, are Hunt as assassin and Nixon on property and crookedness. When you soar to such incredible fancies that are so opposite fact and so insulting to me, and do this on



take strong and personal offense? I have more than 500 pages of a Watergate book written. The rest of this paragraph is so far lower than an intellectual and moral sewer I ignore it because to do otherwise would seriously offend you.

The muse of history has selected me for nothing. I have nominated myself to do at great cost what the likes of you and yours have been unable to do. For this I do not earn your insults or sophistries. I am in no dilemma. I have the choice between playing with children who pretend they are adults or doing work that can serve a constructive end. I'd be a fool to hesitate for a moment.

The only way I can use editorial help is before retyping. Our limitations preclude anything else. I have actively sought this going back to 1966, at long in late 1967, and accepted it when possible, as when Fernabel and Hoffman went over work when they were here, Gaggie Field and Bill O'Connell on Whitewash II (they did nothing at all), Paul Hock and others on other manuscripts. But I have to live with the practical, not your substitutes. But I am not going to start all over again with more than a third of a million words because you now offer to go over the first chapter. We simply can't waste that kind of time with all I have undertaken and the extremely limited time my Arthritic wife can find for typing. I accept this as a genuine offer, but it is impractical and too late.

I am aware of this new interest. Despite your fiction, I am the only one of us who has seen to it that his work (truth to you) is still available. I send copies out on an average of more than daily and have for the past almost six months. Again, it is ipso facto your invention.

I see every reason not to "correspond about matters of absorbing and mutual interest." It was to save your ego but it would do nothing toward developing more fact or establishing truth and it would seriously intrude upon the going forward upon which I am constantly engaged. It is my hope, perhaps a futile one with the self-concept you inadvertently disclose, that these explanations, if blunt, might persuade you of that. If you have the choice between my taking time to hold your hand and give you little tidbits and my attempting to do what you have not, which would you really want of me?

Death certificate: I have written a long book and I can't justify the time to summarize it to indulge you. If what I said is too cryptic for you then you understand less than I had assumed you should after a decade of what you describe as diligent inquiry.

That business of the rear admiral is another example of the offensiveness of your ignorance combined with your know-it-all assumptions: I gave all of that to the incompetents in New Orleans. It was my work, mine alone, and I did do the opposite of your unprincipled accusations. There are dozens of witnesses to it. It is one of the things that taught me that context and completeness are quintessential. What good did all that do? It did get wife attention. And let me personalize this so you might get a little perspective on yourself: what have you do in the intervening years to advance that "truth?" I first gave that way and then when they made a mess, went on and did more.

If you misunderstood what I said about Lattimer, I'm sorry. I did intend the reference in the p.s. From what you said nothing else was possible. If I erred, I apologize. As I do for not taking the time to correct the typos.

I do not expect you to like or to be persuaded by this but I have made the effort. I do not expect you to accept my evaluation of what corresponding with you can do toward developing more of what can be developed or getting more of what I have developed down on paper. If I did no more investigating, if I were to work a 15 hour day for ten years, I would not exhaust the possibilities of what I have already developed. And I have another obligation at 60 which I consider more important than indulgences: getting my work ready for the inevitable. I am spending time on that and I have a dear young student who has begun it.

I can think of many worthwhile projects those of you who proclaim this great dedication to getting the truth out could have engaged upon. One is the preparation of a consolidated index to all the published work. That would make the available retrievable. It is one of the things now being done with my books. Another is preparing an index to the materials I have not yet had time to read. A major part of my endeavor is to do what you dream of and insult me about, to make what I have available, not for for diseases and not for the destruction of credibility but for authentic scholars. Sincerely,