

Dear Jim,

11/9/88

I've finished reading the paperback of Tony Summers' "Goddess" and have not changed my mind.

I regard it as over-written sleaze.

Tony has, of course, a right to do an axe-job on the Kennedys, and he does this. But he pretends the opposite, that as a reporter he is merely asking questions.

In fact much of the book is based on dubious interpretations of what people allegedly said (some of this not even second-hand), conjectures and various kinds of hints. All is made to appear to have solid factual value. *Often it does not.*

Toward the end I made a few notes in the event some later reader is interested.

One I recall relates to the utterly baseless allegation that Marilyn Monroe's phone records were obtained not by the FBI but by the Attorney General or the White House. As you know very well, and as Tony should have known, it is not at all unusual for the FBI to get such records from all phone companies all around the country. The King case record, for example, simply bursts with them. Yet I've never seen even a suggestion that under any administration any AG or White House was ever able to get such phone records on its own.

JFK's womanizing was well known and had not been the means of any kind of blackmail. Whether or not Bobby womanized, and the record is far from unequivocal even in Tony's representation of it, there was never any attempted blackmail and there thus was, for this and other reasons, no legitimate reason to even suggest she was murdered to protect the Kennedy name.

With all his conjectures and surmises presented as beyond question, Tony fails to address what I regard as a significant question: would J. Edgar Hoover have had anything at all solid on Bobby's personal conduct and failed to have made some use of it? I think not, given the state of their relations. And, given all his sources, I can't imagine that it existed without his knowledge of it.

The existence of Spindell's tapes was so well and publicly known that based only on the public domain I wrote about them more than 20 years ago. That Jimmy Hoffa was Spindell's client also was public knowledge. Now, do you think that Hoffa would have gone to trial - and so many times yet! - if those tapes really had anything on Bobby at all? Or that having gone to trial and then having been convicted, he would have disclosed nothing at all about those tapes? If they held anything, that is.

Given the state of Monroe's mental health, which Tony does make clear enough, her acute depression and what he glosses over, her ultimate failure in her last movie, I think it is both unreasonable and unfair even to suggest that Bobby was involved in murdering her or in any way in her suicide.

Toward the end I developed a few political questions, about the beliefs Tony may have superimposed. He described Ralph deToledano as merely a "reporter", without indication that his views and columns are of the far right, and at the same time is ostentatious in describing others as "left" or "Left" or "lefties." Compared with what is his concept of "left?" Some thus characterized were, as of their time, rather centrist and not really left. Except to those with a special view of what is left.

I think that what made me uneasy in reading this book is lost on most readers, who lack the background for questioning, and might well be on those who do have the knowledge and could ask questions, the axe-job is that smooth.

Thanks and best wishes,



11/12 addendum

Yesterday I had a long conversation with a Los Angeles friend, a movie old-timer who had discussed several aspects of the Monroe death with me several years ago. Having just finished this book I asked him to recount what he'd told me before. My recollection was correct on the essence but not 100% on the fine detail. I should have made notes but we were interrupted and I did not have a chance to go over what he said and then make notes. (Someone came here.)

My friend, who has always been in the production end of movies, along with several others interested in getting Monroe to do a movie for/with them, had arranged a dinner for all of them to discuss the project. There were to have been four couples, Monroe and Peter Lawford to have been the fourth. They were to have dined at about 8 p.m. but were awaiting Monroe, who'd been a friend of my friend. I do not recall now whether Lawford was with the others awaiting Monroe's arrival or awaiting her elsewhere, I think the former. When she did not get there ^{at} whether Lawford phoned her or she phoned because she was late. Whichever way it was, I am clear on the fact that she said she could not come because she had taken too much drugs. My friend used the word "overdosed" but he did not say whether, as I now recall, this was his or Lawford's opinion of Monroe's statement. Whether or not Monroe used that word I am clear on the fact that she was communicating that idea. Those awaiting her got that idea and were both panicked and shocked. They worried about doing anything that could cause her more trouble than she was in. As each idea got some opposition from others present they finally decided to get in touch with as I now recall her business manager. Among the ideas discussed was phoning the police and an ambulance and those who had responsibilities toward her, like lawyers.

One of the importances of this is that it was several hours earlier than the crisis time Tony uses in his book. It also was early enough to support what he reports, that an ambulance was to her place and picked her up earlier.

My friend told me that Lawford's last wife did a book for which he had low regard and which he sought to duck. He had a low opinion of this woman and said that Lawford stayed with her because she provided his drink and drugs, what finally killed him. Her book was on the Monroe death and my friend says it was not a good one. He said that she said that she scattered Lawford's ashes over the Pacific because she had no money to continue to pay for their storage. My friend believes that if money had been a problem for keeping his ashes wherever they were the Kennedys would have seen to it. I do not know anything bearing on this.)