

7627 Old Receiver Road
Frederick MD 21702

June 1, 1991

Ben Bradlee, Executive Editor
The Washington Post
1150 15th St., NW
Washington DC 20071

Dear Ben:

When it became apparent on Thursday that you and the Post's counsel had felt compelled to reach some kind of agreement with Oliver Stone, I wrote George immediately, assuming the threat of a spurious lawsuit that could be very costly, was involved. I told him I would do nothing to embarrass the Post.

When The Nation came yesterday I was reminded of what I'd forgotten, the decision against it for using about 250 words of Gerald Ford's unpublished book. It is apparent that you had no real choice.

Not knowing how I will feel tomorrow after I read Outlook or how much I'll be up to, I write you now, knowing nothing about the agreement or of any possible future restrictions it may impose on the Post.

I'll not use any part of the draft of a letter to Stone that kept growing as I learned more and when I do write him I'll not quote either the script or anything he wrote the Post. I hope that what evolves may, with editing, be publishable and definitive.

As I told George, I have been informed by someone who says he has a copy of the shooting script that Stone made only relatively minor changes that seemed to conform with earlier criticisms of the original script.

In any event, it is not possible for Stone to shed his dependence upon Garrison's book without an entirely different script and, despite his recent squirming, he stated publicly that his script ~~was~~ based on that book.

Without quotation of the script, it is possible to write what should and I believe would be a journalistically and historically important book that would also be entertaining and for which I believe there will be an exceptionally receptive market.

The importance and the market will both be greater if the book appears before the movie and the reprint.

When George liked my proposal of a book, I wrote him without his having asked it giving him complete control over the content.

I hope that you may find it possible to let him have a sabbatical of a couple of months so he may write the book rapidly.

I believe the book will be well-suited for serialization and that, with Stone's honors and prominence as well as because of what he has been saying and may yet say plus what the book can say, the serialization will be of value.

If this is not impossible and if it does interest you, for my part you can have the serialization rights free.

There is no conspiracy theorizing in any of my six books on the JFK assassinatin or that of King. I have debunked most of the books advancing unproven theories as facts. They, like the coming Stone movie and Garrison's shameless self-justification, mislead and misinform people and bury truth deeper. Stone's "flimflam" of "trash," as Valenti has described it, has the potential of misinforming and misleading more people than any earlier disinformational exploitation of either side.

If I were not convinced from my experiences in the field and my knowledge that the book could at the least diminish this harm and, with luck, ruin the bastard in the womb, I'd not have spent the time of which I now have so much less not working on another book that means much to me.

Sincerely,



Harold Weisberg

June 2- P.S. I've read Stone's statement, drafted a lengthy letter to him that I'll read and correct, without taking the time for the editing and perhaps cutting that would improve it so I can mail it sooner, as soon as my wife can retype it (probably tomorrow because she'll be away most of today), so that as rapidly as possible he'll have it before he can misuse his own self-serving statement without being dishonest in his use of it. In the same mail will be a copy to the Post. This assumes nothing of the Post.

H.W.