

1/18-second

Dear Ed,

I had hardly finished writing you earlier and arguing that the problem is not at all that I am a one-subject nut or before I saw proof of my argument. Today's CBS-TV early morning news gave Seymour Hersh enormous attention. I do not recall as long a segment ever on it. I think it was three segments in all. And he is doing what? Exactly the same thing he has always done. (and very well) the military and their atrocities. This was on another My Lai nearby. He had no trouble getting published. It is in the New Yorker and will be again in the next issue. The difference is the subject, not the fact of a single subject.

That subject once also was taboo. There is nothing new in it. I remember so clearly an airplane trip with a young Marine I am almost certain of the exact date, Friday, January 7, 1967. I was returning from Chicago, where Albert Jenner has chickened out rather than confront me on TV, and Elmer Gertz did, accounting for the character of his "review" of Frame-Up. This trouble young man reported different kinds of atrocities, in some ways even worse because they were more individual. I found no interested reporter among those I knew. But that was 1967, not 1971 or 2.

This subject is like no other.

There is a tide in the affairs of men. But if the man is not there when the tide swells, what good the tide?

HW

1/19/72

Dear Ed,

Flattering as I find your letter of the 15, and much as I appreciate it, I disagree. By the book, it is right. By the reality it isn't, as I see it. Perhaps in the narrow sense it would be better for me were I to turn to something else (as I have more than you know but not in completed books). But I would be plagued by a conscience that would make good writing on anything else impossible. And there would remain the question I believe I asked, who would then do what little I can do?

Unless there is someone or there are others who would, the next question is, is this work that should be let go? Or as I put it to myself, is it not work that must be done? Again speaking in terms of realities, I argue two points based on the assumption that this work must be done: two others only are doing any meaningful work, and both are well occupied with school (J&K&P). Others pontificate and would seek to impose their work of the past on the decisions of the present—often and often wrongly do—but that accomplishes nothing and often is counterproductive. The other argument is one I

hope does not sound like an indulgence of vanity, but I feel there is nobody else of whom I know who is capable of doing what I do and have done. I think this is more or an indictment of the critical community and the country that vanity, for the things I do seem simple and obvious. I think they are and should be. Yet others do not understand and do not see. I cite the Battimer things as an example. (And as I think you know, while there is no serious member of the critical community who does not have a fine mind, there is also no substitute for experience and minds work in different ways. I have regularly seen some of the finest minds commit the same stupid blunders and recently had the experience of finding them all closed.)

I correctly understood a year ago that something like this would have to be. I had not the slightest idea how it would be done, but I knew it would have to be. I wrote Wecht a letter he has not yet answered in which, after having thought the problem through, I told him that I believed he and I working together could break the whole thing wide open. Gary Schoener is here. Last night, while we were talking, I told him what I had in mind. He is the only one with whom I have discussed it. It agrees with my evaluation, that it could have done it. But no other critic was even thinking that way a year ago. Now, in about September, again I saw the coming trouble, and I wrote most of the senior and responsible critics (no ref. to actual age), and to this day I have yet to get a thoughtful response. To some I laid out two possibilities in arguing that Wecht should not now ask for access, and the first is the one that came to pass. So, it came to pass, and who has done anything with it? Because I knew in advance and know what was supposed to have followed, I was able to take certain steps. I am aware that they may have made no difference. But I think the fact that what I know was planned hasn't happened suggests I succeeded. I have done many other things that I have no time to report. They may turn out to be a total waste of time, but I felt they had to be done, I did them, and perhaps time will tell whether they should have been done or whether they accomplish anything. But in the entire critical community, there is but one person who helped in any way, Jerry. I am not at all sure that he agreed with my overall belief, perhaps he disagrees. But he made some effort, a sharp contrast with others much better informed on the subject, much more mature and experienced than he, much more able, and possessed, despite their protests to the contrary, of as much time. You should understand that the older ones are the only busy people in the world. If you do not, just ask them. I could give you specific indictments of the older and respected one, but that would do no good.

The great tragedy is that the Battimer flap could have made a spectacular success of Post Mortem. Now that Schoener knows more of its contents, with that also he agrees. When you ultimately learn its contents you can have an opinion of your own. It is an act of debaration by somebody, I do not think Marshall or Teddy. It provided the ideal opportunity for intellectual judo and makes so total a wreck and shows such complete dishonesty by Battimer that I think the major media would have gone for it. But it was

not available because I am broke and because the well-off and the wealthy (and I know of net values to \$50,000,000 in the critical community) would not make it available. Now when people of such extensive wealth will not help bring the suppressed to light, and again I urged you to consider that the content of this book is exceptional, can you understand our bankruptcy?

There are problems I think you do not understand. One is the hunger to be the one, the lone one, to be the breaker of the case, the yearning for fame. ~~xxxx~~ It has driven some to do things of which they would not, ordinarily, be capable. It is a special kind of sickness, easy to contract. The ego involvements are little understood. I get reflections of them from others that those who suffer them, often in the attribution to me of what the others have. I say and do little or nothing, nothing ever in public. But when there is time for such emotion and not for work, again, what is the condition of the critical community?

The craving for me to be wrong is another affliction I frankly cannot understand. As I said, I was right on the Lattimer thing. It is clear and obvious. But I have yet to hear from any of the seniors on this (in ref. to time on the subject). Not one. The great curse with egos is to be right. Nor has one done what your own intelligence would have told you, asked me what else I anticipated, having been established as the correct thinker (I think none of the others did any thinking).

Now let me take time ordinarily I would not for other aspects. As a general statement, yours is correct. But with regard to the attitude to the subject, there are exceptions, and they lie in narrow and unlikely areas. The Lattimer ploy provided one. Even without publication of *Hi*, we had a golden opportunity. The money it required was peanuts for anyone with a decent job, and you know some are well off. But none did what could have been done and none asked me if I would, if I saw anything that could be done, etc. One that I think had a good chance is a press-conference answer. Examine the media reactions to Lattimer with this in mind and another, whether it is because of the special one-subject curse that + have publishing problems. I think not. I am aware of the dislike for me, but there is a respect of which you do not know going along with it. NBC and ABC ignored the story. It was a one-day story with the *Times*, although I do not think this was the original intent. The wire services did no more than repeat the *Times* and attend a press conference for Lattimer (provided by CBS, but that is of such little consequence I have done no more than confirm it). They laid an egg. This does not mean they failed in their central purpose, which we may or may not understand. + have some ideas. This is, among other things, a reflection of disinterest in the subject. That is today a bigger problem for me than unpublishability.

You are partly correct on Frame-Up, but the real trouble was the publisher. He killed the book. Had I the means, I could have pulled a Kurzman, as I did with *WV*. But I think you should re-examine some of the raw material you have provided on the Frank book and add it to other things, including the remarkable coincidence in timing. There was neither need nor demand for the release (ugh) of this stuff now, it did require open illegality, and there is the incredibility of the fecal Bishop syndication in violation of all precedent and reasons and a few other such things all coinciding. Can you regard this as meaningless, as no more than coincidence? And it is something in the face of which I should turn to other things, if I could? I think not. I think there are ~~xx~~ many situations we could have exploited well, but those who have the means will not use them and have not understood these possibilities when presented, again an indictment of them, not self-praise. Frank will provide another. I have made a written proposal this time to one who can provide these means and has ever interest in doing it. I do not expect it to happen. So, because I have to stop, I ask you to forget what others have done in the past, that in the present being meaningless, and ask yourself the two questions with which I began, if I drop this work who will not do it and should it be abandoned. I do appreciate your concern for me, but in what is required of me, in its cost, I know it even better than you. I am prepared to live with it.

Sincerely,

1/15/72

Dear Harold,

In response to your letter of 1/12 on The Lattimer Affair, I stand by my previous critique.

P.M., despite its content would have no material effect whatever even if published, simply because Harold Weisberg, an author of previous "assassination books", wrote it! Cruel and illogical, this is a coarsely objective analysis of the corporate media as per the inception of Frame-Up.

Now if Frame-Up had been written by "Harold Jones" - - - - - . By these standards, Mr. Roggman does have a possibility of success for reasons unrelated to the actual contents of his work, however excellent.

Of course, you've given away

Looks but the fact remains  
that unless you escape the  
assassination bag, only evil  
effects - on different levels -  
will result as a consequence.

Don't immolate yourself  
or/and continue.

The existential horror and pain,  
the rights, the betrayals, the  
time, the paranoia of supporters,  
the lonely hours on the road,  
failed recognition, the rearsiders,  
the abuse, days becoming years  
- as the poet wrote - you were  
there. You are there! You, and  
no one else, lived it. Few  
caused.

I urge you: walk away  
and transcend it.

Diversify.

For the good of Harold  
and those who care about  
him.

Best Wishes,  
