

Dear Dave,

5/16/75

Thanks much for your efforts, suggestions and above all good will, of which we find so little.

It is quite possible that some of the students or their parents did order IV.

Since the end of the tax season, or for about a month, Lil has been doing the individual packages and when I was ill most or all of the others.

We did get some kind of order from the Madison campus bookstore. They know my books from before. And how to get them.

Writing individual ones becomes a practical impossibility. However, in this case I tried something different. Because I knew I would not be able to hit the road as I did with the others I wrote each of the large chains that does business with us and offered to treat each as a wholesaler. I also offered, if they would let me know in advance, to get special boxes and mail orders to individual stores for them. Plus unsold copies fully returnable.

Not one answered. Not a single one. Not even one, Hudson, whose buyer had once called me to be sure they could get my books from me.

You mention Walden's. Well, the local store won't even ask the main office for permission to stock one! And we do get decent orders for the old books from many Walden outlets, all billed to the main office. But nobody there has learned that we have a book they are selling and they can sell more by putting a few in other stores.

If any store of any kind gets any request, the books are all listed in Books in Print. (I think the suggestion first came from Jim when he was a student at Madison.) In addition we have a small display ad in that catalogue. All except IV are in both the ad and the listing. It went to press after the catalogue did, so it will be in the next one for the first time. (And that will bring orders.)

It is a practical impossibility for me to do much that I'd like to. I can't keep my head above the old water and new pours in daily. I can't even get to mow grass or remove large trees that a windstorm took down. I got more behind when I got pneumonia and pleurisy just in time for the NYU nuttury. I did go through with a press conference with a fever of 102 and I did come out of it fast and well, but I also remain weak. I have to try to pace myself and I am. I stop work when I feel it and I am sleeping longer.

There are other things I would like to do but the little preparatory work I can't get done. Jim has a friend with a major publisher who deals with libraries. I wrote and asked him to tell me how to write the various journals. No answer.

It was not easy for me but in the past decade I've had to learn to live with and to accept the limitations. It doesn't bother me as much now. But it did.

Perhaps the hardest part has been the people who are supposed to be allies. I could tell you hair-raising stories. The one I like best is the Lane and his publisher efforts to cut my throat before his book was out. They loaded a TV show audience with erudite lawyers all primed to tear me up. Two hours and 20 minutes later there was the most sensational one-man TV special of all time and Whitewash, of which there was not a copy on a single bookstore shelf in NYC the morning after the show was aired, was the best-selling book in NYC the end of the week. One wholesaler reordered three times. Individual stores sold as many as 300 copies and sold out in a day and were without until they could reorder. I had Inquest being remaindered six weeks or so after publication, with all the ads and promo efforts and the Establishmentarian "liberal" support it had. After that, if the book had been in commercial hands, I could have sold more than a quarter of a million easily in the original form.

There was an enormous amount of jealousy. Sylvia, for example, never once arranged for or even recommended me for a single show. But when her book was contracted for and I knew she could not and would not travel, I offered to engage in promos for her and her book to their p.r. director at that year's ABA convention. (I'm not even going to this year's.)

A few have made some efforts, but most of the so-called "critics" have, rather than try to help us sell the book and get the message out, tried to kill it and to rip off the contents. Look at O'Toole's cover, or listen to any one of Lane's speeches. Most are ethically and morally depraved on this subject and most extend it to their personal behavior.

Despite these limitations the book is selling about as well as we can expect. I have not been able to do a single live show on it. I have done many by phone, and to do this I've had to do things like stay up all night. I did one all-night show by phone beginning 1 a.m. our time. I must have done more than 50 broadcasts by phone, maybe more. I had taped them all for Jim, but he'll have no time or need to listen to them so I'm reusing the cassettes now.

Despite all this we have paid off all but \$1,700 of what he borrowed. Then we'll start recovering the other costs, which the older books are paying.

Beginning the first of the year, we have put all but what has gone to finance IV into a special account, escrow, so we'll be able to reprint the older books. Some stocks are getting that low. It means that somehow we have to live on \$25 a week, with our medical insurance taking 75%. But I've paid the bank off and on the house, except for taxes and insurance and repairs, no expenses. We've had to learn to live at this standard anyway, so it has become no sweat.

Virtually nobody in the field speaks honestly and factually and all resent those who do, naturally. Examples: Lane personally blocked a lecture bureau which was excited about booking me in 1968, two years after his book was out. Gregory and his gang, when they urgently needed it for their own credibility, refused to make reference to the contents of IV. Gregory kept me of the ABC shows, personally. We know each other but Lane's poison, now with Schoenman's, did it. Bud killed what Playboy wanted to do, that was perfectly proper, claiming falsely that it was improper, and then actually tried to get Jim and me to agree to an entirely improper deal for pay with Penthouse.

I get as many as two dozen letters a day. But to this day I've not gotten one that said that any "critic" had told the writer to write me or had recommended the book in any appearance. After I took after O'Toole, he started mentioning the book but he is careful not to tell anyone how to get it.

While I presume they have gotten it by other means, not one of the "critics" besides Sylvia has ordered a book from me. I think Gary Schoener did from Jim and perhaps one or two others did. Paul Hoch, which had said he'd go to the Berkeley campus with 100, wound up with the minimum number to take care of his friends, like Scott and Stetler. Those three are doing an anthology ~~but~~ and it has political orientation, but they are using Jim's part on the FOI only. And nothing from any of the other WW books.

We had really enormous publicity when the boom came out. I was lucky enough to figure out a successful by-pass of the prejudices. We had attention that was as large as more than 40 square inches on the front page of the Sacramento Bee. Major stories syndicated by AP, UPI and the WxPost. But no bookstore wrote in response. Not one. Yet few commercial books are launched this way.

We have to live with these realities. They mean that the supposedly jointly-held purposes are reduced as the sales are reduced. (All Bud would do, by the way, is co-sign a note for me. I did not need a co-signed with unmortgaged property.) The kinds of things you do can help, and we appreciate your taking the time to do them. I include a flyer in every letter where it is appropriate, and it does help. I doubt there has been a smaller or more successful direct-mail campaign than this little flyer provided. The percentage return was enormous. And we have no alternative. Jim and I are workers, not promoters. And the promoters promote themselves only. If we don't do the work it won't get done, either.

I'm dealing with a lecture bureau. I think they'll book Jim and me both beginning the coming season. That will help. But in reaction to this great publicity on the book, centered on the CIA, we got no single invitation to speak anywhere. (With WW it was different. I heard from many and did get around speaking.)

Don't let this discourage you. It doesn't discourage us. And keep trying, with our thanks,



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May 9, 1975

Harold Weisberg  
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Dear Harold:

Just a brief note to fill you in on a few things I have been doing out here in regards to WWIVJFK.

I gave out flyers to students in class and a few have sent them home to their mothers and fathers. A few ordered them, they said, through the piggy bank at home. I trust so.

I just returned from Madison where I gave a flyer to the University Book Store and asked that they put in the WW series. They promised to do so. I talked to them a bit about the background and the relationship to other books they had on the JFK murder. Probably you will get a request from them, I am almost certain.. May I say that they are the ~~gix~~ biggest book store in Wisconsin and they have a tremendous inventory of books and works as they must through kids and clerks and in general people who do not read books. Perhaps in a few weeks you ought to write them a strickly formal letter with stamped return form for reorder. I of course have no way on this earth to know if one should approach it that way. It seems to me a good way to do.

At Waldens book store they carried your WW I and WWII and multiple copies of every book on JFK in print--about 30!!! I discussed with him, the manager, the subject of the WW books and asked why he did not carry the WW III and WWIVJFK books. He said he did not know (?) of them (and you must remember clerks and kids do the book work at these business stores). I gave him flyers on the books and he said they would be ordered inside the hour. Your books were featured on the rack. The manager said when O'Toole (the fool) spoke in Madison people came rubbing in to buy books, and the Walden's pride themselves on being people's stores, and bought WW books. I thought you would like that piece of information. The WWI AND WWII books are almost gone.

Have you thought of writing to the various Walden book stores in your area and elsewhere, there are several hundred in the chain, and telling them of your books and their receptions (The flyer to the store in Madison did not tell him at first glance that professional discounts were available and he asked me. He of course had that information and would have looked it up anyway from previous orders etc.) Telephone directories would list them. Of course, you know what you are doing and I merely offer this advice, maybe you have already done it, or it is without merit or etc.

I think you might write the bookstores of the major universities and send appropriate information and ask them to stock the books.

Regards, Dave wrOne

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