

Dear Dave,

12/19/75

The timing of your 12/15 could not be better. At any moment I will be interrupted, I'm tired from being up until after 1 a.m., when a broadcast ended, when I look around and see how far behind I'm getting it starts to overwhelm - and I mean mechanical work like filing only, not what I really ought be doing. So, your concluding comment about Post Mortem is a lift. At a time when I can use it. I'm troubled by staying so tired.

I'd have written you as soon as possible anyway because Ira Fistall or Fistell, I think of WERP, Milwaukee, will be in touch with you for a broadcast. First you should know you can do it by phone if you are not going to be in Milwaukee. He spoke of your bibliography, etc., and I spoke highly, etc.

I found him a very decent person in the way he treated me, the audience and the subject. And I've had lots of experience with people in his role. He comes across as one of the best.

I take it that despite the condition of the package the flyers can be used. If not please let me know. Or if you need more. Until we can find time to see how many we have we can't decide whether to print more not folded. 2,000 were to have been unfolded. However, if I have to reprint, I may add a few tiny squibs, plugs.

With what you've said about PM you've given me an enormous lift. First I've been troubled by the writing. After my initial experiences this became secondary to me and remains that way. I have just so much time and how do I use it? My decision was to make the record as completely as possible. Also, years ago I made real efforts to get an editor/assistant-in-residence. If those of large means and larger mouths had the dedication they profess this could have been done and my output could have been close to twice as much. And better.

At the outset I ~~was~~ decided against doing the writing, getting a collaborator for this so I could continue investigating until the first book was done. I had a book contract for this. By the time there was writing for me to see there was none. By then this, as it turned out far-right, former hot-shot report agreed for me to do several chapters, amount to close to half of the book. I did them and then went to see his work. I got sick. So disturbed that in driving back from Philadelphia instead of turning at Baltimore toward Frederick I kept going until I realized I was on the way to Washington. This was 2/3/65, perhaps 2/2. The contract called for delivery of the completed ms. 2/15. I phoned the publisher the next day, said I'd have to take it all over, got his agreement, and believe it or not all of W1 was sent by 2/15. I had to write chapters out of order, what I could do fastest first so that, with what I had already written, he could start editing. I am sure I wrote all of it in less than 30 days. I never had a chance to outline it except in my mind. On it, however, as I thought I did make notes of what not to forget, etc. That is the closest I've ever been able to come to an outline in any of the work. I've been writing while developing material on all the books. While I now have no clear recollection of having it in mind, I have always been concerned about how to keep interest constant or growing with materials of this nature. The most common comment about WW 1 is that it red like a murder mystery. In fact, in was runner-up for the mystery writers award of 1966! I've forgotten but I think Rex Stout's novel won. I was, as I recall, second. I'm glad you find PM grows that way. I know the reading is not easy, but I also know that my market accepts this. I have letters from professional people telling me they've just reread W1 for the 10th time! and countless commendatory comments on multiple rereadings, each of which the writer tells me discloses more. Now except for the rereadings this does not surprise me. I'll explain until the delayed guest comes. From the first I was aware of what I could not responsibly say but of which there should be a hint. This led to persisting ellipsis. It is conscious. You'll find some in PM. In fact, I'm certain that if you reread some of WW! you'll find these elliptical hints carried forward with the evidence I did not then have but analysis told me had to exist. PM was most difficult of all because it was written over an 8 year period, without an outline and always during turmoil(s). Worst was what is not part 2. I began writing it the Sunday night before the Shaw jury was impeached, at Matt Barron's, in New Orleans,

on a partly-broken East German portable he had. I resumed next morning in a small room in Garrison's office, on an old electric machine and on a regular rather than a typing table. I'd never used an electric before. I left that Thursday in disgust, without ever going into the courtroom or laying eyes on Shaw, who was just down the hall. I kept working, giving them a chance to change the doctrine of the case as a condition for my having anything further to do with it (I supplied all the non-Shaw stuff except Carr). I had to have the work completed before the incompetent wecht, who by then I knew was incompetent, testified in La. v Shaw in Washington. I did it in two weeks, which included packing, unpacking and travelling both ways. (I asked Meagher to edit it. She flipped ~~max~~ over it but declined for reasons I don't believe.) I wrote ~~it~~ what is not the third part while I was developing it and while I was also doing other writing. While reassembling, spying, acting as my own lawyer, trying to keep Bud straight and from copping out, while giving others an alternative to me suing, etc. It is virtually all a rough draft. I did go over some of what I had on the WxPost and cut some of it, which meant an enormous mechanical job of just reproofing, which I had to do myself. I posted all the changes, corrections, etc.

With this kind of situation as troubling as I am sure you can see it was to me, that you can say what you have means much. However, some of that which you notice is intentional. Like switching the second part from being the third. I took part of the first part out when I could find no publisher and laid it aside. I did not expect to be able to get as much as I did but when I did I made that the third part.

You use the work that keep recurring in my mind, Byzantine. Ed Kabak, who is generally critical of my writing, liked this and was impressed by what he called the sustained sense of horror.

One other comment: I had started writing the fourth part when I latched onto the money that could finance Howard's coming here. When he got here I gave him no restrictions. I don't recall what he took out where there is a bit of appendix in the middle of the third part but I'm sure he was right. We put those documents there because otherwise the whole thing thereafter would have had to be reproofed and the index done over. In the 4th part I let him out stuff out without question. It was a close call and I accepted his judgement. In retrospect I'm sorry. My instinct was correct. It would have made a larger book. I also gave him a free hand on the appendix. I had too much. I let him decide what to eliminate and he did the lacing with footnotes.

His book is to be republished in March by A.S. Barnes, with \$50,000 promised to promote it. This is the kind of investment required for a publisher to make a real effort. If he doesn't put the money in the book has to hack it on its own and begins with great commercial liabilities. When they get this word around the stores will assume the book will get attention and will sell. Those that might not order will. Those that might have ordered a couple will take more. It is a very promising sign and we are overjoyed for Howard. It also means the publisher is shooting for a bestseller and has to have in mind generating enough interest and attention for an attractive reprint contract after maximum hardback sales.

I've given Howard a little commercial/contract advice and suggested also that he ask Barnes to ask Fairleigh-Dickinson to let them read Howard's fine work on the early origins of the cold war. It does not have the commercial potential but it is a book that can seel, to students for years.

What can we do about that Harvard Guide to American History? Or maybe this is a question for a lawyer. It is an intellectual and scholarly outrage.

Guest here.

Have a good holiday,

December 15, 1975

Harold Weisberg
Frederick Maryland.

Dear Harold:

I know you are terribly busy with several important things and I will not take up much of your time. Your package of flyers for Post Mortem arrived today and it was absolutely pulverized. It fell apart on my kitchen floor without one side left affixed to another--literally. The contents however were intact. It took 12 days to reach me.

The students are leaving now for semester break and will return in the middle of January, then we will start milking cows and see when we can get you out here to bend our minds for us.


I have not read ~~any~~ news of you or Jim in the local paper, ever. You were mentioned in two paragraphs in the Milwaukee paper about the middle of November or earlier on the perjury charge. Nothing, else. We are reading the papers and scanning all articles for material lifted from you and your books. Lane creates one hell of a mess where ever he sets his cloven hoofs and throws kids off.

I have written to the publisher about Presumed Guilty and have not gotten an answer. Also I have tried again to break into the learned journals on the question and have not gotten an answer and have quite one journal and will another. The learned professions --about 20,000 historians, etc--are sealed on it. The Harvard Guide to American History (1974 ed, 2 vols.) is the bible of libraries and historians and graduate students and professors who don't read books but want a guide (which is most of them) and it cites six authors on the JFK assassination --Alex. Bickel in Commentary (1966?); Jim Bishop; Macnhester; Stephen White on CBS; Newmans nuttery; Greenberg's study of the public's response. Nothing else. You wouldn't know the critical literature exists. It is like the old time monasteries where the world was shut out and the celebrants sang the glories of the past that never was.

WE have placed over 250 phone calls to the local CBS station on the JFK garbage program and scores of letters. While the effort must of course be made at the national level local agitation keeps them busy answering thephone and may make them think a bit.

At the present ^{time} I am re-reading Post-Mortem. You were correct in publishing it in the form you did I think; the unfolding nature of the question reads like a murder mystery. I can't praise it enough. I am compiling a ~~genealogy~~ chart of the chain of possession and a complete bibliographical listing of all cited works and papers. At the same time I am taking notes on various subjects as they pop up and as you trace out the theme--Kennedy family fraud, the actual autopsy, the chronological frame etc. It is utterly Byzantine. How did you keep the thing straight to write it up?

regards,


dave wrono