

Dear Dave,

12/31/87

Your letter of 12/29 marked #2 (#1 has not come) came at the right time: I wasn't able to do much besides sit so I sat and thought. I'd done what turned out to be too much tending the fire. That this dogs happen is the major reason I've done no writing, much as I want to. I can't do much and I just stay very tired.

What was too much is very little, just standing a bit more than ~~xxx~~ usual a ~~bit~~ bit more often while trying to get some green wood to take fire. I can never tell what will be too much with these simple things, for others simple. And if I get into what I'm writing and forget to get up and walk around a bit, that, too, knocks me out. This is much more so since the prostate operation.

Phil Melanson never told me he was working on a book. He did say he was doing some research and I recall he did, quite some time ago, consult me about the Ray aliases, if I remember correctly, Galt in particular. He was building some kind of case against the real Galt.

However, he has a perfect right to do a book and not less a right to keep that secret from me. And I think you had little choice, that you did the right thing.

If he's spoken to Jerry, Jerry hasn't mentioned it. His line was busy when I phoned. Got him - not told about book, not consulted as you asked but did have a question or two about "the McCullough file," meaning those parts of the sanitation workers/lynchings files. (He has all but four exams graded and has his marks to get in by Monday and Barb is down with a herpes infection, so New Years Eve's dinner out is off.)

I think the suggestions you gave Phil are good and should improve the book.

I always have a question about Praeger, though, because he was a CIA publisher. That doesn't mean he would not do a book today because the CIA would not like it but perhaps he might be more interested in a book the CIA would like. As because of its errors regarding the CIA. Praeger's then director of special projects whose name I recall as Mort Puner went big for my first book and Praeger turned it down despite that recommendation without reading it. He read the ms. overnight. Sent to him by a mutual friend.

I've discussed this with Jerry but won't to anyone else. Ed's explanation of his desire for secrecy is self, so many writers and academics are that way.

I'm glad he didn't ask for my help because I'd probably have given it. That might have taxed me some.

Although Garrow seems to be a reasonable suspect for the adverse comments he is anything but an expert on the assassination. He knows nothing at all about it. He doesn't have a word on it in Bearing the Cross, which is think is an excellent job.

What I spent the time thinking about is none of the above. It is your comment that amounts to somehow I should do the book. I thought about it enough to have two pages of the first chapter typed. New first chapter, one that can make integration of the mostly completed draft of 1974-5 possible.

This means I'll have to do it off the top of the head and hope to fill in and flesh out because I'm not up to much searching. And there are two other things I must do first. One is filing pro se against the local urologist and hospital, and time for that is close, with many problems, and the other is filing for an en banc review in the field offices cases. After sitting on it for a year the appeals court ~~xxxxx~~ held against me without even reading the briefs, on an out-of-order and completely wrong DJ motion for summary affirmance.

We are about as we were except that I've had a rougher time beginning about a month ago. <sup>Not</sup> know the cause and Dr. Hufnagel didn't a week ago. In some ways, though,

things are good. We cashed in a CD and got a new furnace and a new car, the latter a dream and a steal. I have a 1987 Plymouth Reliant K LE, which is the top of that line, for about \$4,000 less than list, with the 7-year, 70,000 miles guarantee, used by Chrysler. Car cost \$7175 plus state taxes and \$100 for the book work necessary in all the guarantee transfers. Gave old faithful, just beginning its 24th year, to a local high school with an auto shop. The new car has all the things I felt we could not afford and some I'd never dreamed of. Auto shift, air conditioning, power steering and brakes, fuel injection, fantastic stereo with four speakers, excellent heater (no more winter-time hotwater bottles!), upholstery instead of plastic, rugs even in the trunk, larger motor etcetcetc. Got gas yesterday, first time in two weeks. Now remember, I don't drive much, but in that time I went to the lab at least three times, went to the mall daily, took ldl shopping several times, went out to eat twice that I recall, drove a little in the neighborhood, and I used \$4.62 in gas. Cold mornings now I start the car at home, return to it in 5 minutes and have some heat. I go to the mailbox and park with the heat and radio on and go over the morning papers until it is light enough for headlight glare not to make problems with my cataracts. Don't disturb ~~me~~, have excellent music and get started on the papers that I've generally finished with by the time I'm home. The furnace is insurance. The old one was working fine but was quite old. Paid for both from one \$10,000 CD and had a few bucks left. Another oldster I see daily where so many of us get our exercise introduced me to this nearby dealer, an old friend of his. The dealer brought it up to show me himself, after pretty much of a verbal agreement by phone, and after we agreed to buy it he told me he knew all about me and if it needs repairs or service, he'll come and pick it up and return it. It has a leak over the driver's door and he was as good as his word. That the car had been driven was ~~a~~ break for me because I'm not able to break a car in properly now. It also is quieter than any of the cars I looked at. We are pleased that we got a good buy on just transportation and more than pleased with the luxuries thrown in at a much lower price than the smallest and cheapest cars we looked at. It is a four-door and we have no trouble with the width of the front doors and find the separate back doors convenient with groceries, etc.

We had two Christmases, the very enjoyable Christmas Eve one with the McKnights and a Christmas day one with a friend you've never met, a former professor whose father, of all coincidences, taught my older sister in high school.

Hope all of you had a good holiday and have a good year ahead.

Best,



12-29-87 #2

Dear Harold:

After I prepared a letter for you and was ready to mail it, I remembered I had wanted to tell you about a telephone call and bookmanuscript from Melanson on MLK's assassination.

He asked me to keep it all confidential as he was attempting to secure a publisher--Praeger. So I have. But I suggested in strong terms that he contact you for several of the points. I do not know if he has or did or will do such a thing which would be invaluable for him as I read the manuscript.

Essentially this is the scenario. Right in the middle of my busiest time in early November as I was attempting to clear the deck of work and these extra-curricular energy sappers so that I could arrange a long letter to you on JFK, Phil called and asked me if I would read his manuscript. It appears that Praeger took in the typescript and sent it to a reviewer who gave it the highest praise. They told him so. Then instead of a contract he was sent a letter stating that the editor felt he should get a second opinion before submitting it to his board. Then shortly he got a reader's opinion through the mail--anonymous--that tore the manuscript to pieces. Melanson figured out by internal evidence that this had to be Garrow. The attack was vicious ranging from frontal assault on the facts, on Phil's scholarship, to assertion that he, the reviewer, was an authority on the murder and that . . . He needed another reviewer and after consulting with Stone (?) asked me to do it. So what could I do?

The manuscript has many good qualities and is written in clear terms focusing on three things: Ray before the assassination; the assassination and the evidentiary base connecting it to Ray; and the immediate aftermath with attention to intelligence services.

I remarked to him that the first part did not stress, or for that matter mention, the anti-war, anti-poverty, pro-reform of the social system, etc. of King's background and immediately to Memphis. (A few fleeting references to poverty appeared.) Also the Memphis scene ought to be examined more closely. I gave him Jerry McKnight's articles, the last and best he had not heard of, but which fit his thesis to a tee. By indirection I hoped Jerry's scholarly apparatus would be conveyed to him, for Melanson merely cites the original files and does not provide the more elaborate form of the notes that "scholars" like to chew over and praise in their mindless ways. I trust he will contact Jerry.

On the murder itself he is fairly responsible. Except. His ballistic section is appropriate enough to cast reasonable doubt on the official conclusions, but he lacks the tough analytic examination in terms of the science of ballistics to carry out doubters or even convince the average reader. He agreed he would toughen it, be more clear, check out such things as the swabbing and so forth--I mentioned ~~hardly~~ strongly that he speak with you.

I of course am no expert or even reasonable factual critic of King's murder, but I think I assisted him in strengthening some areas. I convinced him to drop a chapter on an Andrews suspect that was simply non relevant. I also suggested he provide a discursive essay in his bibliography pointing out some of the literature's strengths and weaknesses, especially showing that Garrow is not an authority on the assassination itself.

12-29-87 #2

It is unfortunate that he did not place King in his proper context for the murder and he informed me he would attempt to redress that area. Also he should at least in the notes make references to the same m.o. operating among the FBI and CIA and other areas of the country--Minute men, etc. For example his references to FBI informers should have noted similar operations round the country, to give the reader more assurance that this actually happened and is not the special plea of a critic.

I think your book on King will be most essential now to put this subject to rest. As you might surmise I did not provide Melanson with any of your confidentially disclosed information.

He has done a prodigious amount of research on RAY's background, on Canada, on intelligence operations. But he lacks the focus on the central issues it seems to me that is incumbent on the subject

Again

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "David".

David

My first book on the investigation of the assassination of President Kennedy, completed mid-February 1965, was runner-up for the mystery-writers award the next year. However, there is but a single source in that book that is not an official record. It is an AP story reporting the comment of two members of the Warren Commission about the FBI. There is mystery, considerably mystery and dissatisfaction over the official solutions to the political assassinations of the 1960s - and there should be. This is because those most subversive of crimes were never investigated officially, as will become clear and will be without reasonable question.

However, the writing about these crimes and these failures of all the basic institutions of our society, should be not be done as mysteries. "One of my seven books has been, despite consideration of the first for the mystery-writers award.

Treating these subversive crimes and institutional failures as mysteries has been a curse of the literature. Whatever inspires them, and publishers prefer the approach because it is commercially more promising, they have served to protect the institutional failures and those who failed personally and to confuse the public.

No matter how serious and sincere these theorists have been, they have been or have been used as disinformation.

It is not to avoid this trap that what would ordinarily be the ending of a book comes early in this one. Rather is it that on this subject matter, which gets to the essences of free, representative society, commercial considerations ought not be a factor and because this book, as the seven which preceded it, are studies of how our basic institutions functioned or failed to function in those times of great stress and since then.

For the reader's understanding, therefore, what might ordinarily be regarded as the "solution" to the mystery of the King assassination appears early, with

detail, documentation and explanation ~~is~~ following it.

This is not to say, however, that no secrets, no mystery, appears at the end. But again, this is not as a literary device. It is for context and comprehensibility and so that the reader is in a better position to make an informed evaluation.

Our system of justice was corrupted on two levels, official and commercial, the latter by a book contract compromising the supposed defense lawyer. The official corrupting is a major part of this book.

The prestigious writer, the later William Bradford Huie, decided, with the kind of instant vision the late J. Edgar Hoover has boasted in these political assassinations, that James Earl Ray was the lone assassin of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Huie contracted with the late Arthur Hanes, Sr., to pay him for the literary rights to James Earl Ray and his story. This saddled Hanes with an irreconcilable conflict of interest and it kept Ray, despite all the contrary publicity, for which Huie is largely responsible, from getting so much as a penny for the literary rights and for any use he might want to make.

Huie promoted himself with a story in a newspaper weekly supplement featuring a phony check on the cover, his nonexistent check for \$35,000 to James Earl Ray. Huie paid only Hanes, until he also bought the most eminent and successful criminal lawyer of the era, Percy Foreman, who cost Huie less money but served his corrupting purposes even better.

There is a simple question those of us who write nonfiction ought ask ourselves - does this make sense?

Huie, of no Olympian ego, either did not ask himself this question or reached a conclusion that is not rational or reasonable and makes no sense at all.

Huie is not alone. The FBI did not ask itself this question. I know because under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) I sued it and got what it represents is all of its records relating to the crime and its investigation of the crime