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Dear Bud,

While this is an update for you and Jim re Zebra/King I do not forge my comments on my learning about how hard I am to get along with. I keep hearing it in generalities, yesterday from Walter who is oblivious to his own bad behavior with me. I was not as pointed as I could have been, less than I should have been, and I don't know if what I was trying to tell him will get through to him if he thinks about it.

Prior to the first meeting with him and Roberta I discussed a reformulation of the new King book with Jim and Les Payne. We agreed in general on a simple structure. When Jim and I met with Walter and Roberta they said they liked it. They wanted to see what I have to support what I say so they agreed to come down with Geller and house counsel, Jerry. They then get their dates mixed up and wasted two more weeks getting us around to that. They said they were impressed, that they had never dreamed about such backstopping for any book.

We talked about other works, those of which you know. There was such excitement that Walter offered me a deal for this and three more books, the second three to be delivered within a year. I could not accept this and did not. I gave him a partial explanation. I gave him the rest yesterday. He then admitted that my refusing to accept the contract he offered me was in his interest. When I declined it when they were here he abruptly switched to we'd do the first and see how we get along. I agreed. He asked me what I want and I said \$20-\$25,000 advance and help, an assistant and an editor. It is my recollection this was more or less agreed to at the \$20,000 figure and that they had only one question, could Geller be hurt. Come on the book but some on whether he'd have to be detached. I told them I wanted to plan the book with them and they said they'd be in touch. I told Walter I was in much that I would not just drop but that the minute I get a contract I would, that I'd push as much as possible to clean anything I could up.

Weeks pass with no word. I phone. He is apologetic. I say when will we sit down and plan the book. He'll be back to me the next day. It does not happen. Finally, when I have transportation problems - my ride's wife's pregnancy - he tells me don't worry, they'll come here if necessary. Finally it is set up for yesterday.

In the time he's wasted I could have completed a draft.

We start talking yesterday and he is ecstatic about another book. I should write a first-person one saying how great I am. I decline. He explains further and it is less objectionable. Still further explanations and I say it can be a worthwhile book but that I will not write it, I'll co-author it. By this time it is clear he is waving tinsel. It would be a great book if I include a few of the King documents I showed them. I refuse and say I'm there to talk about a King book, that I think it has unprecedented potential, that we were to have gotten together to plan it and still have not. So he backs off this scrimshaw but with conspicuous lack of enthusiasm.

Unless Roberta never says anything she was cued in to this interpretation, then, earlier or both. She had nothing to say. Here I am saying that I have more than anyone can use, tell me what you want so I can do what you want and I still have no answer. So I tell them how I visualize it and they agree. This is where it comes out that everyone Walter talked to tell him I am impossible to get along with. They have been toying for all these months, are never as good as their word, I am patient with all their childish games with a serious subject, I give them carte blanche on content and editing and I am hard to get along with.

He mentioned no names and I asked none.

But I want it known by all my supposed friends that if I ever heard this one time with attribution the one to whom it is attributed will never forget it. There is not one about whom I cannot tack off a ruinous record. And I will, believe me.

My unpardonable sin appears to be seeing clearly and correctly, forecasting accurately and then about all of this maintaining a public silence.

Not one ever asked for help without getting it. Not one ever paid me for this, except with this miserable personal business in which each seeks to hold me responsible for his own failings, not uncommonly the same failings repeated ever and over.

If we can't undo the past I'm not reliving it as now I'm being forced to with Walter.

Now I'm in a bind entirely of Walter's making, probably at least partially influenced by this nasty business. It is exactly as I told him, if we did not proceed immediately time problems would develop. I could see some. There have been others.

I hear much about the great accomplishments of others if I do not see them. I try to do what I can and I know what it produces. But when I am without means I have to find ~~many~~ ways to pay what for me are considerable costs. I've about cleaned out what remains of what we got for the Hysattstown property and I have to do anything I can to be able to pay what for me are oppressive costs. I have an income for this week that will pay for perhaps six weeks of predictable costs. Once it is past, if there is not a result that can yield more and if it does will take more time, I now have to help Jim prepare what we must do in C.A.75-226. There are, of course, other matters that require time and cannot be ignored.

This means that thanks to Walter and his vacillations and the influence all my supposed friends have had on him I cannot for a little while get to what he has asked. As soon as I can I will. It may be as little as a week. I won't know until after Jim is back and has hold of things again.

I want you to know what I did to eliminate problems. It is not only to give them carte blanche, which is more than enough. I arranged with both Mae Payne and Howard for them to read copy at the ~~rough~~ rough-draft level and for John Hanrahan to edit - all before retyped copy gets to Zebra. If you don't know John he was State editor of the Post until the pressmen's strike, when he was fired for supporting the pressmen. I had also arranged for local copy reading as it came out of the machine but that person since has been taken ill. I have other people working on earlier preparations for me. Now you tell me this is being hard to get along with.

On substance I tell you only that we have never had anything like this. I have shown Walter and his people enough but very little. I have copies duplicated out of my possession. If you want his evaluation ask Jim. I have not authorized him to tell anyone what the fact or evidence are. I add to this that with what Lane has done to you and Jim in ~~his~~ his monstrosity it is important for both of you for me to have this out as soon as possible.

When I have this all put together Jim wants to deliver a copy to Griffin Bell. I think Bell will want it. Or be very sorry if he does not.

Walter wants an outline and a sample chapter. Because it will take longer for a real chapter I offered an outline and the introduction. He does not want that. This means it has to take more time. There is not this time. But I also have no choice because I can't go around the publishing houses and I can't do anything about this wretched bullshit so many people have been making ~~careers~~ careers out of in childish efforts at self-justification. As soon as I can I will do what Walter really does not need now. It is an excuse for something else. I will then be prepared to proceed on my own again if he does not make firm commitments, including date of publication and promotions. If at my age and in my condition it is not wise for me to have another book to pay for and promote and less wise for me to take this time for from other work, I really have little choice. This diletantism

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and the unchanging dilettantes are the reason.

I can't explain Walter in this. It makes no sense. If there were merit to any of his shifting supposed reasons a nominal expenditure would eliminate them.

He supposedly wants books that can bring him prestige. I leave you with your own description of yours. I'm sure you were honest in what you told me. If Kantor's is good it will not be really significant. McDonald's, in spite of what they may tell you, they knew was a fake when they did it. So you tell me why he has been spinning my wheels for me all this time with a work of such solidity it cannot be imagined.

If I correctly understood something he suggested he also has other crap in his gut. I don't know whose book or what aspect.

Meanwhile, as I told him yesterday, I know of other shit books he has been offered. I told him of Lifton's and Chastain's and he saw I knew what I was talking about. I do believe that when he has other ~~work~~ works under consideration stalling me and shifting around and not keeping his word are not encouraging.

So while I am impressed by him, find him to be an able man, a pleasant one, I have questions. He talks one way and goes another. He appears not to have any interest in meaningful work regardless of what he says.

The more crap he prints the less chance there will be for serious work, even if he manages to make money from crap. I do not expect a repetition of McDonald and if the work is bad enough I may not be silent about it.

It is possible to simplify this, to say that when you have met one publisher you have met them all. So he is another publisher, regardless of what he says about himself. Looking at it this way he is no worse than others. And I neither want to publish myself nor mail books out myself. Even if the only ones of my books that have not done well are those others published. So I'll do as he asks as soon as I can and hope that the effects of the bug that bit him will wear off.

When he was here Walter was so excited about Agent Oswald he wanted that first. Now he is not ~~is~~ talking about it.

What he is doing to me, if he goes ahead, is saddling me with the burden of all the crap he has under contract and in mind. If they do not do well and he does not do well I'll be paying for it. Incredibly he cannot realize he is talking about crap.

So I am unhappy about this situation and more than unhappy about all the ~~lousy~~ lousy things being ~~said~~ said about me because ~~it~~ they are hurting not me but what I can do or it seems now even try to do. If this can't be undone it had better not be repeated by anyone not prepared to say it to my face. Whether it is presently a factor or is not I can't be sure. It is Walter's explicit "explanation." What it has meant on the Hill should be painful to anyone of decent concern.

With all of Walter's shifting he may shift again. If we go forward on this perhaps it will mean that I can have an assistant, can be more efficient, can do more.

In any event I hope that those who think they know me can understand that it is the real me that would have nothing to do with his attractive offer of an easy ego-trip, nationwide attention and all that goes with it. All I really want to do is what I have from the first, not what others invent and come to believe.

As I told Kathy, this time I may have to tangle with Lane. Much as I'd enjoy it the only reason I'd do it is because it is necessary. Meanwhile I'll do nothing to discourage any of his appearances, any promotions for his terrible stuff and any of the copies of plugs and stories or tapes I may get. In the end they'll help. I think your interest will be served by getting tapes of his two recent appearances on the Jerry Williams show, one with Cohen and Lifton and a later one from Palm Beach, by phone.

Sincerely,