

MAR 17 1972

3/17/72

Dear Js, LF,

This is not an emergency or an urgent request. It is merely to ask that you save and send whatever comes to your attention of the death of Feltrinelli. I knew him. He was my (crooked) publisher in Italy.

I knew him as a man not quite what his public reputation would have him, hence I am not persuaded by the typical, initial police report, that he was killed while engaged in an attempted bombing. I think assassination not unlikely and especially after Lamia am not inclined to discard the possibility of official inspiration.

Despite the urgent recommendation of his American agent, Sanford Greenburger, F declined WHITEWASH at the International Publishers' Convention of 1965. I was there. My recollection is that if the decision was not by his wife, it was communicated to Sanford through her. They would not even read it. When I made a success of it he came to me for it. I got the advance and not a penny more and it took four or five years to get the most dubious accounting. I never got the regular statements, I know the count is a fake because I know from other friends that his initial printing was sold out before it was printed. I met him through ~~Richard~~ R Ruggero Orlando, then with L'Europa and US rep of Italoan radio and TV, for whom I made several broadcasts and by whom I was interviewed. The three of us went to a press party by a big publisher for a Hell's-Angels dressed type. Walking there I was able to persuade F to contract Macbird, which he had refused to do on Sanford's urging. He came back to me after WHITEWASH with an utterly irresponsible proposal, one I was not prepared to do on the basis of what I knew and one which cast me in a role outside my self-consideration. "You should do a powerful J'Accuse" now", he said, and forecast spectacular sales for it. I declined, explaining why, and he would thereafter consider no other proposal.

If he published important works, he never did, to my knowledge, when the publishing did not promise profit. I never knew of him to publish from principle only. He never let his beliefs interfere with profit and I suppose the other way around.

I knew him not as a Communist or a pro-Communist but as an anti-fascist, and they are not synonymous. I find it hard to believe that having accumulated great wealth he became in person the kind of man he would not be in business. I have no idea what he was publishing recently, but Guevara's diary is hardly a revolutionary publishing venture. That is the last of his books of which I know. Even then he didn't do it first. Grove did it first here.

And I am aware that he could have been engaged in a political life separate from his commercial life. Even there I can't conceive of him as this kind of activist. So, I have this interest.

And if it turns out that there is a reasonable case of assassination, I may want to write his widow.

Thanks.