

Mr. H.C. Nash
209 N. 7th St.
Morehead City, N.C. 28557

11/15/76

Dear Mr. Nash,

Your letter of the 6th, postmarked the 10th, came when I was away. I've just now seen it for the first time. I respond in haste because there is much that now will require my time.

I am not able to take the time to consult my own files. You say you understood that I realized that you were writing a book. This would be a radical departure from a long and consistent record in which I am willing to be forthright in private but avoid what can be divisive in public.

I've read your electrostatic copies. There is no opinion in them I do not now hold. This is not the question at all.

However, it is grossly unfair to me to juxtapose the impression I held after one meeting with Penn and L.A. and what I later came to learn. That for which he won the Lovejoy award is enough to justify the descriptions of brave. So was Penn's account of himself the one time we then had met, toward the end of 1966. Oswald in New Orleans was completed early in 1967.

It is not faithful to say that I am "One of Penn's severist critics." I almost never think or speak of him. I have not even bothered to get his ~~xx~~ third and fourth books, if that they are.

There is another problem with this. What was relevant four or five years ago is not today but it will be judged by today's knowledge and standards. Still another for me is that I have no idea of what your book will say or how this will be used in it.

The last graf of your quotation of my letter leads me to believe that I was consistent and did not expect publication: "Those of you who have ideas of your own to begin with and lack the knowledge for any dispassionate assessment..."

On this if on nothing else I believe Penn is irrational and has been for years. I do not see books in the irrational and I do not publicly say they are irrational. I see that even you say "he has corresponded as follows," referring to my letter. I am sure I have never spoken so in public or for publication. I'd prefer that you omit this and me. After the lapse of so much time I believe anything else is unfair to both Penn and me. Certainly my 1966 opinion is ten years later.

You admit that what I said about ENK was not for publication. I do not want to go public with any comment on any danger to him. If you restrict yourself to the first sentence and include the date in the text rather than a footnote I'll not object.

No objection to the quote from Whitewash.

Sincerely

Harold Weisberg