

June 5, 1967

A. C. Spectorosky

Mr. Nat Lehrman

RE NORMAN MAILER IN VIETNAM

I spoke to Scott Meredith this afternoon about the possibility of sending Norman Mailer to Vietnam for PLAYBOY. Scott tells me that Norman is very hipped on doing this, but Scott is reluctant to let him. That leads to the sales pitch. Because of the high hazards, etc., etc., Scott feels he would expect \$25,000 for the piece (plus expenses, which would cover transportation and a stay of about one month). Scott indicated he would entertain a counteroffer.

As for the type of piece, Scott felt that Norman would want to write an impressionistic, philosophical type of piece, as opposed to straight reportage.

Length: Scott suggested that it would be a rather long piece, perhaps to run in two or three issues, although he indicated he would accept our counter suggestions.

Because of other commitments, Scott says Norman would want to do this as soon as possible, probably during the summer.

NL/pb

Dear Paul,

Tuesday, June 13?

Forgive the sloppiness of the returned mss but as you can see, I'm writing by hand, and I am without a secretary at the moment.

First off, let me congratulate you on the job. I read the interview with pleasure, and I now think it's good and I like it. Hooray. It's obvious I therefore agree with most of the editing.

Only one large demeror. We can't take out the stuff about an existential God. ^{It's the center of the interview} So I restored that. Which made the subsequent stuff on Kennedy and Oswald awfully thin and tatty. Therefore I cut hard there. Later on, as you'll see, I restore a few things and indicate a number of possible cuts. Fight for length, but where you must give in, please take it out of the possible cuts. ~~Good~~

Now for the questions:

① I have no desire to answer. It's too complicated and would take too much space, and my ideas are not necessarily original there.

② (Put this question where you can.) I prefer The Beast's Alimentary Query by Service and Humphrey.

③ It is answered on p 29 of Copy #1.

④ It is disposed of on p 55. Copy #1

⑤ (Put this question where you can) The surest way not to be remembered is to talk about the way you want to be.

(over)

I'm sending this back airmail, and assume
wire okay. Please call me if we're not. I
tried incidentally to call you, but no luck.
Also, I would appreciate knowing the
definite date of publication of the interview.
Could Lehman drop me a card in the next
few days about that? Also, when I could expect the galleys?

How did the pictures of me come out? Remember
when you lightly promised me veto power?
Could you see if they'll come through on that.
I'll send the photographs back to Playboy
by return mail, but I would like to
pick photos which come near to the spirit
of the interview rather than clash with
it and between us I don't trust photo
editors. They are hypo-fucks and developer prick.
A little pressure may work wonders with Playboy
here because I believe they want me to do a
piece or two.

That's all for now. Have a ball in Buffalo,
tal Fiedler I'm with him if I can be of service,
and get to Ptown this summer. Love to Inara.

All best

Norman

P.S. I'm keeping Copy #2 since it's xeroxed
and Copy #3 for my kids.

PLAYBOY •

playboy building • 919 north michigan avenue
chicago, illinois 60611 • (312) michigan 2-1000

June 19, 1967

Mr. Norman Mailer
565 Commercial Street
Provincetown, Massachusetts

Dear Mr. Mailer:

Thanks for returning the interview, with the kind words about its editing (which Paul read to me from your letter). It was a pleasure working with Paul on this assignment, and apparently he enjoyed working with you as much as I did with him. Thanks, indeed.

The date of publication of the Interview is September PLAYBOY (on sale around the middle of August). There is a possibility, however, of a switch because of scheduling problems connected with the sale of your bull-fighter piece to CBS. I'll let you know something definite as soon as I do--probably when I send you galleys of the interview for your initials, and a release for your signature.

Paul mentioned your colorful reservations about photo editors, which I share. I therefore pulled rank on them and selected the photos myself. I think they make you look like a nice man, but an articulate man, with interesting and stimulating ideas. If this bullshit doesn't reassure you, I'll try to send a photostat for your approval later this week.

One last thing: I asked Paul to ask you for a clarification of part of the "giving head" section. I didn't make myself clear. I know what giving head is (and like the phrase better than "going down on") but don't understand why it's a weakness, why it's a good way to get rid of some of our weaknesses, and why the mind's a devil. Because of PLAYBOY's preoccupation with this area of life (my regular job is "Forum" and "Advisor" editor, so perhaps it's my own preoccupation), I'd like to give the readers a less poetic and more literal explanation. Can you help me?

Thanks again, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Nat Lehman
Senior Editor

NL/pb

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Thanks again, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Nat Lehrman
Senior Editor
NL/pb

June 23, 1967

Mr. Norman Mailer
565 Commercial Street
Provincetown, Massachusetts

Dear Mr. Mailer:

Here are Xeroxes of the layout and contact sheets for your interview.
I hope they meet with your approval.

Sincerely,

Nat Lehrman
Senior Editor

NL/pb
enc.

565 Commercial St.
Provincetown, Mass.
July 5, 1967

To: Mr. Nat Lehrman
Playboy Building
919 N. Michigan
Chicago, Ill.

Dear Nat,

Let's save time since we may be working together for many years. I don't like any one of the three pictures. I have absolutely no interest in looking like a nice man when that nice man looks like a nice businessman in need of six weeks in the sun. So I send you back the Xerox's of the contact sheets after having marked a few pictures which are acceptable to me, although let's face it, dear confrere, none make me happy; but if you won't take three absolutely gorgeous pictures I have in the back drawer, then by all means, dear Nat, use the pictures which I have marked, for they will make me much happier. They are numbers 4, 5, 7 and 8 on the page I've marked with a Roman numeral I. Incidentally, picking these pictures was about as easy as winding film in the dark, because a Xerox of a contact sheet is about as clear as the image on an old dollar bill; so if the only pictures you intend to use in the interview come from this job, then couldn't you send me a copy of the contact sheets so I'll have a better idea of whether I'm indicating my true preference. As I say, 4, 5, 7 and 8 are far and away the best of a dull lot. But I'd be happier if I wasn't picking them with Xerox fluid in my eyes.

Now, to lighten your day a little further, dear Nat, let me say that I don't know what I can do about enlarging the succinct remarks I make about cunnilingus in the interview. I accept the validity of your criticism, to wit, that my remarks are elliptical here, metaphorical, and far from crystal-clear. But to elaborate these few cryptic suggestions to the point where every crew-cut fraternity-house jock-strap all-but-faggot young Junior in Business Administration should be able to comprehend what I am saying would take a bit of genius on my part as well as three extra pages of text; for how can he comprehend that the mind is a devil when he has no mind? Well, Nat, when I had my historic, most enjoyable, and cards-face-up conversation with Speck and Scott Meredith, my agent, last year, the point I trust I made clear to Speck was that the quality I like least in Playboy, that precise quality which had kept me from wishing to write for it for many years, was the literality, blandness, and overdedicated organizational exposition of the magazine's style. I prefer to write pieces where the readers don't understand every word. If I am working for them, let them work a little for me. Otherwise, writing is like humping some beautiful fuck who's sipping aspirin and soda. All due respect for the fine, and I repeat fine, editorial job you did on the interview, I ^{still} can't go along with you on this particular suggestion. I want the reader to be slightly puzzled and slightly nettled at that point.

Give my best to Speck, and I look forward to meeting you one of these days.

Sincerely yours,

Norman Mailer

NM/ga

Norman

PLAYBOY

July 31, 1967

Mr. Norman Mailer
565 Commercial Street
Provincetown, Massachusetts

Dear Norman:

I'm sorry to take so long in replying to your letter of July 5. I had been waiting patiently for contacts of your photos, and didn't realize that communications with the Photo Department had not been made until Jack Scovil bugged me today. In any case, here are the contacts. I hope you will be satisfied with three of the four photos you checked off on the Xerox. If not, please send me the photos that you prefer, as suggested by you to Scovil.

I will be vacationing in Japan from August 5th through August 27th, so I won't be able to finish up this business until I return. If there are any errands I can perform for you while over there, please yell.

Sincerely,

Nat Lehrman
Senior Editor

NL/pb
enclosures

cc: Jack Scovil
Scott Meredith Literary Agency, Inc.
580 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10036

PLAYBOY

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565 Commercial Street
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Nat Lehrman
Senior Editor

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cc: Jack Scovil
Scott Meredith Literary Agency, Inc.
580 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10036

Norman Mailer
565 Commercial St.
Provincetown, Mass.

AUG 31 1967

Dear Nat,

Please forgive the delay. I thought I'd sent the pictures back to you and now discovered I haven't. At any rate, the ones I like are 5, 6, 7, on page one and 30 on page two.

Now I see by your letter that you won't be back until August 27th, so apparantly I haven't held things up after all. Delighted not to have been of disservice.

Best for now,

Norman

PLAYBOY

October 19, 1967

Mr. Norman Mailer
142 Columbia Heights
Brooklyn Heights, New York

Dear Norman:

Here are unproofread galleys of our Mailer interview, which is definitely set for January PLAYBOY. These galleys reflect the material you saw in manuscript form some months ago plus the corrections you suggested. I would appreciate your initialing the galleys (after you have read and approved them), signing the enclosed release, and returning both to me at your earliest convenience,

Sincerely,

Nat Lehrman
Senior Editor

NL/pb
enclosures

cc: Paul Carroll
Scott Meredith