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To: NORMAN MAILER

From: MIKE LONNAN

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Number of Pages (Including Cover
Sheet): _____

Comments: Dear Norm,

Here is the Nixon
piece from the New Yorker

Mike

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temptuous feeling behind the release of the transcripts—that people couldn't, or wouldn't, read them.

JAMES A. FARLEY, former chairman of the Democratic National Committee:

Last September, I said it was a sad and sordid story, and I have no reason to change my opinion.

JOHN GARDNER, chairman of Common Cause:

The impact is going to be very great on the American people. My own feeling is that the movement of public opinion in this case has been very powerful and consistent. The erosion of the President's position has been remarkably steady over two years. I think that the chief impact of the transcripts on that opinion is that they lay bare the totally manipulative quality of the men in the White House, and the almost total absence of moral tone.

NORMAN MAILER, author:

Quick thoughts: Nixon's crime is his inability to rise above admiration for the corporation. Throughout the transcripts, he is acting like the good, tough, even-minded, cool-tempered, and tastefully foulmouthed president of a huge corporation—an automobile man, let us say, who has just discovered that his good assistants have somehow, God knows how, allowed more than a trace of tin to get into the molybdenum. Now they have the choice of calling back one hundred thousand cars with faulty bearings or letting a few pile up at the traffic lights. The press and the politicians scream that he has no moral values. He has no more and no less sense of value than any big corporation president in the land. Who, after all, polluted America in the first place? Now we're having an Aztec ceremony to clean up the mess. We won't be happy until we cut Richard Nixon's heart out and hold it high on the summit of the Presidential pyramid while an ooh goes up from the crowd. But his crime, moral insensitivity, is the one with which he began, prospered, lost, despaired, and finally succeeded in the passion of Richard Nixon. Good old American moral inanition. Was Lyndon Johnson less disgusting in Vietnam, or Jack Kennedy less cynical in some of the conversations he had—doubtless had—about the little workings of the C.I.A.? Poor Nixon. He makes the peace with Russia and China by pitching the political equivalent of a shutout on his own right-wing Murderers' Row (which no Democrat ever

had the nerve to do). Then he slips on the dugout steps. One could pity him, if not for having been shamed by his presence as the Uriah Heep of the Indo-Chinese war—all those years when one had to listen to Nixon speak of the enemy as he ordered the carnage and bombardment. For that, Nixon will never be forgiven, but these are schizophrenic years—the separate parts of ourselves hardly communicate—and so one is even tempted to admire the final release of these unreleasable transcripts. What a boon to historians, what a blow to ambiguity. How much easier it might have been for Nixon to resign and cry foul for the rest of his life, thereby to muddy the last washes of Watergate. Instead, he takes the gamble, he rages “against the dying of the light.” Yet as he takes this last desperate step, he nonetheless repeats the theme of his life—he cannot take the step with all of himself in the same place. Expletive deleted. He lacks the simple New York smart to keep the obscenities in. All his life he has been trying to tell us he is a man, a real man, and we keep replying he ain't. A real man knows how to swear. Now he finally has the stuff to show it. Better, he flings himself on the final court of public opinion. Yet we still do not know if he even swears well. He could have had the bars of America laughing with his prejudices, saying, Hey, the guy is no good and he can prove it, but he's one funny guy, he'll make you laugh. Instead, our Richard squirts deodorant at the smell in the room, and we all feel the pall. I'm beginning to think he is doomed. The stubbornest man in America, and doomed. With all his congealed and unadmitted boldness, with all his transcendent hypocrisy (the gas of his false pieties enters the very spirit of anti-matter), still he has always been, in the final crisis, the fool of small-town caution. So, in the grand boiling of the pots of American opinion, our National Yardbird goes into the broth without his feathers, and all salts withheld. We will be a great nation on the day we come to see that his ability to poach in his own juice is the American disease of us all. For the flavor of his moral invention, as he cooks himself, is saccharin, preservative, and gobs of super-burger. Bile in the stomach, canker on the tongue, and woe in the pit. What if his horror is the same as ours when we say at 3 A.M. *we are not so bad as they think we are*, and writhe in the thought that God may not agree? Let someone say, at any rate, that if ever a human was obliged to drink the cup of his own ex-

cretions, then the last or the next-to-last of the classic American Presidents has been that man. What a curiosity is our Democracy, what a mystery. No novelist unwinds a narrative so well.

CHESTERFIELD SMITH, president of the American Bar Association:

The partial transcripts of the White House Watergate tapes recently released by President Nixon are dumbfounding. At best, the transcripts reveal amazing and astonishing thought processes at the White House. Certainly they have demonstrated to my satisfaction that the type of moral leadership I personally expected from President Nixon and his close associates was totally lacking. It seems to me that anyone who reads them, no matter what his prior inclinations, must conclude that the conversations revealed are both unbecoming and unseemly to the high officials who uttered them. I suppose that the one dominant conclusion that I reached was that during the pertinent period involved in the transcripts there was an all-encompassing moral vacuum enveloping the President of the United States and those of his advisers whose discussions are partially revealed there. The transcripts are, of course, not the best evidence. Only the tapes themselves meet that evidentiary standard. It seems obvious to me that the House Judiciary Committee must continue to press for full compliance with its subpoena. Watergate and its sordid aftermath can only be put finally behind when the average American comes to believe that no additional incriminating evidence is being withheld by the President. Unfortunately for President Nixon, the release of the partial transcripts of the taped conversations created exactly the opposite reaction.

ORVILLE SCHELL, president of the New York Bar Association:

The recorded Presidential conversations submitted by Nixon shocked and concern me more than I ever believed possible. They must be read by every American. Even though edited, not only do they admit an ugly, corrupt, amoral, and unprincipled Administration but they also show how close we came to losing those basic principles we all believe should govern us. As a people, we owe it to ourselves, to the past, and to the future to get all the facts, so that we may properly and without delay carry out the Constitutional process of impeachment. Then, with full knowledge of what actually did happen, we must establish safeguards to see that it does not happen again.

May 28, 1974

>From 105360.3360@compuserve.com Wed Aug 20 17:04:48 1997
Date: Wed, 20 Aug 1997 17:09:16 -0400
From: jmwordcraft <105360.3360@compuserve.com>
Subject: Copy of: response to Random House
To: "Elizabeth L. Adams" <adamse@wilkes1.wilkes.edu>
Content-Disposition: inline

Dear Liz,

I've been out of the office a lot but Joy deMenil has asked for Mike
's answer for the second time now. I forwarded him a cc of my
response
just now and am sending it to you as well so you can print it
out, shove it
under his nose, and ask him please to check his email and answer
the lady.

Many thanks.
Judith

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: jmwordcraft, 105360,3360
TO: Lennon J Michael, INTERNET:lennon@wilkes1.wilkes.edu
DATE: 8/19/97 1:54 AM

RE: Copy of: response to Random House

Mike,

Thanks for phone changes. Sorry this has been slow but things
have been
hectic here.

re your response to RH's questions:

working title is now "Fifty Years" and should be noted as a
working title.

Questions 1, 2, 3 are fine. 4 is also fine. I would express
your answer
to 5as a minimum # of words--by listing #s of essays, you give
them a stick
with which to beat NM (should they ever be so inclined) if there
are 59 or
82 selections instead of the 60--80 you mention. Also, I would
refer only
to "selections"--which covers poems, novel excerpts, dramatic

excerpts,
etc., etc. as opposed to essays which, of course, has a specific
meaning
that does NOT apply to all selections.

So--no mention, please, of a # of selections. Just a manuscript
of no less
than _____ words and make the # something you know NM has.

In writing these things, you always have to avoid language that
they can
use against us somewhere down the road. BTW, in replying to 3,
you might
add a sentence saying that you are doing/have done editorial
consultation
and bibliographical research on the project--this does give
Oelsener the
language she needs--tho there's no harm in explaining that
further.

NM said he feels no need to see it, since you two had a complete
discussion. I would suggest (since she asked me for it) you
email your
reply to:
Joy deMenil, email address: jdemenil@randomhouse.com.

If you have questions about the above, call me, but I think I've
been clear
enough that you can just go ahead and email Joy with your
response. Leslie
just wants the basics to do her lawyer thing properly.

In the next couple of days I'll send you and Liz basic points to
cover in
any permissions letter.
Best,
Judith

To: Dr. J. Michael Lennon

From: Judith McNally

Check your email for details

PAGE 2/2

Joy -- FYI. All consulting editors' agreements are now done by the legal department, not contracts. I've passed the material along to Lesley.

Date: Sun, 10 Aug 1997 12:40:19 -0400 (EDT)
From: Lennon J Michael <lennon@wilkes1.wilkes.edu>
To: donna lennon <dplennon@wilkes1.wilkes.edu>
Subject: notes on the Mailer anthology project

Dear Donna,

Please print out the following for me.

Norman called on Friday, August 9, 1997, to tell me where he is on the project. He has cut it to 2,000 book pages, but still has 400-500 pages to go and they will be, he said, the toughest. He has made all the easy cuts. I suggested that he consider dropping selections from "Ancient Evenings." The two 60-page chunks from this novel are the Battle of Khadesh and the Dinner Party. He says he wants to keep one of them. He has told me before that he thinks that the dinner party echos the wretched excesses of the 1980s in the U.S. But he knows that the battle is the best piece of writing in the book.

He went on to say that he is considering asking Random House to issue the anthology in two slip-cased volumes, but he can foresee their unwillingness to do so. Size is monster to be slain on this project. The blunt fact is that he has written so much of quality. Two volumes in two years has always been my solution.

Regarding a title: He is still working with "Encountering America," with a subtitle something like "Fifty Years of Writing from the Works of Norman Mailer."

He has discarded "American Patrol," "American Reconnaissance," "Of Our Time," "The Long Patrol," and the latest, "The Midnight Writing of Norman Mailer."

We agreed that "Encountering America" sounded like the title of a thematic college reader, as I put it, yet it was still the most accurate title so far.

He continues to wrestle with the issue of how much of himself to put in, that is, how much of America refracted through his ego. Actually, America Refracted, is not a bad title, or American Refractions. I must tell him about it. He is trying to suppress, or lighten up on excerpts from his books that are explorations of his own ego. He has told me candidly that he feels a bit repelled by his old outrageous, outspoken, center-of-the-ring self. He says that this is the part of him that has drawn the greatest criticism.

Regarding criticism, or the reviewers: he says that if this book draws an unusual number of bad reviews, it will show definitively the biases of the reviewers--because the quality of the writing is so high.

Jason Epstein comes down the Cape to read the first half of the book sometime later this month. He may have it all in hand by then.

We also discussed the parallel of his editorial effort with that of James and his work about 90 years ago on the New York Edition of his Complete work. Norman allowed the parallel, but said he was not rewriting the way James was--which is not strictly true. He is making small changes to

virtually every piece in the 2,000 page first draft. He is also cutting pieces up and distributing them here and there, although he has backed off from the savage cuts made to three pieces: "Superman comes to the Supermarket," "the Last Draft of the Deer Park," and "10,000 Words a Minute," especially the first and last of this series.

The middle piece has been in and out several times as he struggles with the issue of how much to include himself in the volume and, also, keeping the more literary pieces for a collection of literary criticism, which he tentatively plans for the following year. These pieces were the very ones I suggested be collected back in 1993 and which led to our long discussion and the actual work on this project.

I was originally supposed to be the editor, but it is clear that Norman has usurped this role, and well he should. He is a magnificent editor. I have become a ficelle, someone who knows his work and can be trusted to talk over his various gambits. So my role in this volume is very junior partner.

that's it for now...

Success + your
W & D all good
Barling Stone - all good

Der Park + -

~~Amor Deum + -~~

Advent + -

Death Fatalis - Time + Golden Redemption 12 Y. Time

Pres labors + -

Amer Dream + -

~~the~~ Carnivals + Christ + -

Vietnam + -

Armies + -

Miami + -

Pris Sex + -

For and Man + -

Ex & manors + -

Manly + -

The Fight + -

Genius + Lust + -

St George + God + -

Exec Game + -

Picnic & Port + - Ancient Evening + -

Tough Girls + -

Paul's Christ + -

Oswald's Tale + -

Of Women & Deeds

beams + -

Bath + -

C = Chrono
M = Montage

C	Portraits	10	#1
C	Cameos		1
C	Writing Politics		3
C	Journalism		3
M	Poetry		2
M	Drama		2
	Novels		
C	Novels		3
M	Place		1
C	Philosophy		1
M	Writing		1
M	Nuggets		3
C	Fulminations		3
C	Sex		2 (Time)
C	Translations		1
C	Criticism		1
M?	Pontifications		3
M	Humor		2
C	Action		2
C	Speeches		3
C	Letters		3
C	Psychology		2
C	Stories		1

Boxing 1
Intro
Reviews 3

24 Categories

$$9 = 15$$

$$7 = 25$$

$$8 = 35$$

Naked +
 B. Shore -
 Advertisements + -
 Deer Park + -
 Deism + -

? Death Rodent Time
 Roes Papers + - Gallenbach

Vietnam + -
 C. C. + -
 Eamon-Smith

Sumner + -
 Kozin Puzr

Miami + -

~~Bo~~ Riesen + -

Fine + -

Marlyn + Kael

Fight + -

G + C + -

Ex Ex + -

St. Forge + -

Ex: Song + -

[Auc. Evening + - DeMott
 Burgess

Warden + Fly P + P + - Hayland

Tough Guys + -

H. B. + -

Oswald + -

Picasso ^{Lemon} + -

Galt

~~##~~
Tough Guys -
Besse
Cummings + Heen
Faye

- Drop one Chorus line, Patron Saint
Drop one Naked Section
Add Cummings
- Drop Lulu
- Drop Elena's letter

- Eitel testimony
- Waldorf conf.