



10/1/88

Dear Norm,

Would you please sign the enclosed for me? One is for a good friend of my brother Porter's. The other is for a friend of a friend. I have put a note on the front of each.

Also enclosed is a review of Conversations with Norman Mailer. The reviewer, Phil Bufithis, is an old student of Bob Lucid's. I like his review, especially his line about your refusal to "neutralize any of the polarities in himself."

I am almost done with Harlot's Ghost. I am going back over it looking for preadilloes — some of your real locations trouble me ("May I submit"). But the book



- 2 -

11-1-89

moves well - has great narrative power
and marvelous evocations of the 50's.
I won't say more now, but will
send the whole ms. along soon.

I do hope your final narrative
push is proceeding all right.
Will it still come out in 1990?

My mother sent me the
Don King / N. Mander ad for Trump
Airlines from the Boston Globe.

Shameless. We had a good
laugh.

Love to Norris et al.

Best to you, Grand
Mike

U

November 27, 1989

Mr. Norman Mailer
142 Columbia Heights
Brooklyn, NY 11201

Dear Norman,

What follows is a summary of my pencilled notes on the enclosed 170 pages of your 1433-page manuscript. I will send the full manuscript by separate cover shortly--the enclosed pages are xeroxes.

Before going on, I should say that I admire the novel greatly. The Berlin chapter is the best section, but I like several other portions almost as much: the first 50 pages, the conversation with Rosen over Glenlivet, the marvelous description of grey and shabby Moscow, the rock-climbing episode that appeared in Esquire, Hubbard's luncheon with his father, all the discussions with Rodman Gardiner, the tradecraft explanations at the Farm (saddlebags are lovely), the High Thursdays, the second long discussion of Alpha and Omega in Uruguay and the fabulous luncheon in the countryside with Masarov.

Of all the characters, Harvey is my favorite, although I think at times you make him too articulate, too sensitive, too arch. Montague and Hubbard Sr. are very fine, as is Kittredge and her father. Indeed, the WASPs came across much better than the South Americans. Hunt is a minor masterpiece and I like Chevi but not as much. Masarov and Zenia are perfect. Dix and Rosen have not come into sharp focus yet, although Dix is better drawn than Rosen--I have trouble reconciling the young, gay agent with the man sipping Glenlivet

11-27-89

Page two

in Maine. Porringer, Gatsby and the other Americans in Uruguay are problematic, I feel.

Perhaps 30 or 40 of the enclosed pages are included just to point out typos or apparent imprecisions. About that many more are included to point out possible cuts; another similarly sized number note Mailerisms that I recommend you cut, words like "drear," "integument" and phrases such as "may I submit," "no small matter!" "let me confess" and so on. No need for Hubbard to sound like Aquarius. There are also pages included here where I just felt like saying "Hurrah!" or "wonderful," but most of your felicities and brilliancies are not remarked on. I tried to mark places where the prose tripped or meandered, or there was a simple error.

For example, the matter of Hunt's commissioning should be re-examined and I have noted the appropriate places. The wisdom of Hubbard having a wife named Hadley, a father who resembles Hemingway and a co-worker named Gatsby might be reconsidered. These are marked. I think you include Egyptian stuff once or twice more than you should. These are minor, grace points.

In my humble opinion, there are two major problems, both of which are commented on in detail in this packet. No. 1: the inexplicable breaking off of the narrative at The Keep might work if the interchapter in the Bronx and Moscow is scrapped. As it stands now, it is baffling and defensive. Sending Hubbard to Moscow to study his microfilm seemed to me to be performing the error which you so wisely avoided when writing The Executioner's Song, namely, dropping the heavy-set screenplay writer pondering his transcribed interviews and documents dealing with Gary Gilmore in a Left Bank hotel. The

interchapter, I know, is an effort to give plausibility to the breaking off of the narrative of events at The Keep. But it raises more questions than it answers. Your ~~desire~~^{attempt} to situate, to seat, to ground the story of the story is very troubling, as my notes will indicate.

The second problem is the epistolary portions of the Uruguayan half of the novel. I know that my commonsensical response may harden your resolve, but I urge you to find a more plausible way for Kittredge and Hubbard to correspond. Can't they send the letters through diplomatic mail somehow? For example, couldn't Hubbard, ostensibly, be carrying out some hush-hush chore for Harlot in Uruguay? He could include his love letters with these if they were routed through Kittredge for additional security. Maybe this wouldn't work, but such a scheme would be more palatable than having a graduate of "Flaps and Seal^s," a die-hard, true believer, send top secret stuff through the open mails. I know that you are aware of this problem because of the several references to it and the late, too late, protective steps taken by Hubbard and Kittredge.

The length and complexity of the Uruguayan section also troubles me. I think it might be reduced by the same percentage that the first half was cut. Otherwise I fear you will have difficulty tying all the threads together. But you probably have already thought this through.

I am immensely impressed with the evocation of the 50s throughout, with the creation of five or six ever-memorable characters and with your comprehensive knowledge of The Company and its history and tradition^s. I hope these rough responses will be of some help. I stand ready, of course, to read

Page four

11-27-89

the last 1/3 of the manuscript or expand on any of my comments.

Thanks for letting me read this.

All Best,

Mike Lennon

JML:ck

Enclosures

30 May 1990

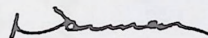
Dear Mike,

Just a line to tell you I liked your review of Begiebing's book but still don't know what deconstructionism is. Next time we get together, I think you're really going to have to show me what we're all talking about.

Speaking of Melville, I had a peculiar experience. I was asked for the PEN dinner to pick a paragraph from some writer ~~of~~ particularly liked and/or admired, and/or etc., and I finally chose the first paragraph of Moby Dick and was staggered when I read it. I suddenly realized--and you'll probably laugh at how obvious this is--what an enormous influence Melville has ~~had~~ upon my style. We do forget who nourished us in college.

Harlot's Ghost is down to its last couple of hundred pages, maybe 3 or 4 hundred, and I've got 60 days to do them in. It's a push. I'm going to Provincetown on the assumption it'll be easier to work long hours there. Heaven help me if the summer starts too soon.

Cheers,



PS from you

Mailed your signed books Tues a.m.
Your note re the picture in Iowa made
my day - glad it all worked.

RECEIVED
JUN 6 1990

Sagehen State University
Institute For Public Affairs

Sangamon
State
University
Springfield, IL 62794-9243



J. MICHAEL LENNON
Institute for Public Affairs
PAC 406
Phone 786-6576
Fax 786-6542

12/8/50

Dear Norman,

I assume that the editing
deal is over, or will be
when you receive this.
Good. I hope you get the
May publication date that
you want.

I am in contact with
the Chicago Tribune about
doing a piece on you when
Harlot's Ghost appears. The
enclosed book is for

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- 2 -

Doug Balz, "Tempo" editor
there. He wrote his dissertation
on The Deer Park and remains
a great admirer. He
corresponded with you
once or twice about writing
an article for the Miami
Herald magazine, Tropic.
I'd appreciate it if you
would inscribe the enclosed
for him and return to me.
I will be sending



- 3 -

12-8-90

You some material on
deconstructionism soon -
brief material. You may
be ready for some deconstructing
after the long, long effort
of writing and editing
Habermas's Ghost. As you
know, I am dying to
read it - in any form.
All Best,
Mike

15 March 1991

Dear Mike,

Just a line to tell you I'm pleased you liked Children of the Pied Piper. Part of the fun of writing for Vanity Fair is that you get immediate response all over town. The only way that New York is like a small town is that everybody you know reads the same magazines, and so it's a little bit like having your name in the local column of the town paper for having caught a 5-lb. trout. I've since done another piece on the Persian Gulf which I think you'll find interesting, and that will be out in a few weeks or more.

The galleys on the book, inasmuch as the rush is over, won't be ready probably until, at a guess, the middle of May, but I will get a copy to you as soon as possible. In the interim, keep your eyes open for Esquire. Gore Vidal and I did an interview with Carol Mallory, and Esquire will probably splash it around a bit, although frankly, I am not looking forward to it particularly since I don't say anything of moment in the interview. And Gore was his usual sonorous self. I expect he'll come across as all of a piece whether one cottons to his ~~piece~~ ^{particular} or not, and I'll seem disinteresting and interesting fragment by fragment. Just between us, it never took off between us while we were doing it. We're each too wary of the other. Anyway, Ms. Mallory will get some money out of it.

The YMHA reading was good, and Joe, as usual, was his fine agreeable presence. I have to tell you: I like your kid and feel a nice sense of integrity in him.

Cheers to you and Donna

Norman

PS: The interview with Updike was interesting. I hadn't realized how much he turned against his formerly conservative opinions. I guess it would take the rich and rot of a Reagan to turn him in that direction.

5 June 1991

Dear Mike,

That was a good review you did on the Nigel Leigh--firm, generous and open where justified, severe where it fucked up--pretty much what I think reviewing should be and is so seldom.

Right now it looks like we'll have galleys by the middle of June, figure June 20, and we'll get them out to you as soon as we can. ~~Right now,~~ the book is coming out early in October.

As for our plans, I don't know when I'll get to the Cape. Things keep holding me in New York, mainly that I've decided to do an extended essay on Picasso that will probably go to 30 or 40,000 words and be a book--a quick book, I hope!--and it keeps me in New York for research. I'll probably be in P'town for sure by the middle of June and will be there much more than not for the rest of the summer. But we'll have to coordinate carefully for I'll be back in new York to pick up additional research. I look forward to seeing you.

Cheers,

Norman

P.S. Now it looks

like July 1.

(11 E - July 1 to be in P'town - j)

June 10, 1991

Mr. Norman Mailer
142 Columbia Heights
Brooklyn, NY 11201

Dear Norman,

Your Picasso project led me to pluck out the enclosed item from my archive. Whatever happened to Ken Boss's sculpture made from your doodle? Picassoesque, it is.

I am hoping and expecting the *Harlot's Ghost* will get you another Pulitzer and/or National Book Award, or whatever they call it. I spoke to Judith about the galleys and she will have a set sent to me c/o my mother in Massachusetts around the 20th. Then I'll check in with her/you to find out where you will be at the end of the month. I come back to Illinois in early July. Al and Barbara want to visit Newport so it is possible we could drive back together from Provincetown after I see you there for the interview.

Carrie Izard wrote to me and she would also like to do a piece on you and *Harlot's Ghost* -- for the *Boston Globe*.

Donna sends her love. Best to Norris and kids.

Thine,

Mike

JML:ck

Enclosure

Avant-Garde magazine
containing Picasso's erotic
engravings sent to Mark
a week later

Sangamon
State
University



J. MICHAEL LENNON
Institute for Public Affairs
PAC 406
phone 786-6576

Dear Norm,

8/30/81

Here is the interview
from yesterday's Tribune.
I tightened it considerably.
Trust that you will
approve.

We love Nabst's Ghost
in the heartland!

Best,
Mike

Books

Mailer's America

On Hoover, Castro, Kennedy
and the CIA: The controversial novelist
speaks his mind

By J. Michael Lennon

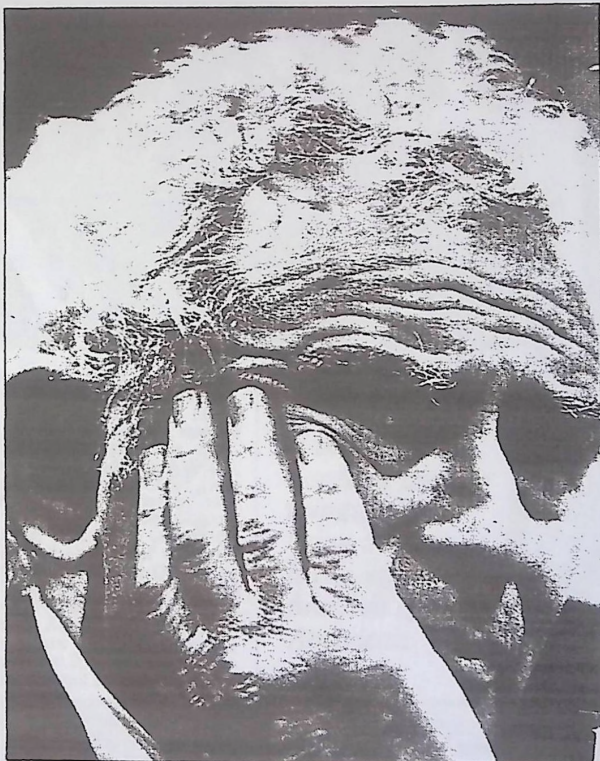
It is an unusually cool day in early July in Provincetown, Mass., and we are standing in Norman Mailer's living room, a large room six steps from Cape Cod Bay.

The three-story, red-brick, ivy-covered house stands in a long row of beachfront homes a couple of miles from the end of the last conch-shell curve of the cape. From his study window on the third floor, Mailer can see the full 180-degree curve of shore and bend of bay.

"Have you finished it?" Mailer inquires about his huge CIA novel, "Harlot's Ghost," (Random House, \$30) which will be in the stores this week.

I answer that I finished the bound galleys less than an hour before. The book's length, I offer, may be an American record, surpassing James Jones' "Some Came Running" and its 1,266 pages. Mailer, a longtime communicant in the church of organic form, shrugs off the length. The book's final length is more than 1,300 pages—and that's just Part One, which ends with the words "To be continued." Part Two will continue the story of Herrick Hubbard, CIA agent, his father "Cal," also a CIA agent, his godfather Hugh Montague, another CIA agent (code name "Harlot"), and Montague's wife, Kittredge. She, too, is a CIA agent and, as we learn in the first pages of Part One, later marries young Hubbard, whose memoir of the '40s, '50s and early '60s makes up the bulk of "Harlot's Ghost."

Mailer explains that Part Two will cover 1965 to 1983. The time frame of the completed two-part novel will correspond to the span of Mailer's writing life up to the publication of his 1983 novel, "Ancient Evenings." That year Mailer said he thought it was impossible to "write an all-encompassing novel about America." His next novel, "Tough Guys Don't Dance" (1984), a murder mystery set in Provincetown, clearly lacked this ambition, and re-



Newsday photo

some of the most cataclysmic events and fabled figures of American life after World War II. Like a long freight train, Mailer's story of WASP agents at the heart of intrigues at home and abroad (Berlin, Uruguay, Russia and Cuba) picks up speed as it snakes through post-war American life, accelerating tremendously as it moves through the CIA's failed invasion of Cuba, the attempts to assassinate Castro and the Cuban missile crisis, and the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

'I think the CIA has done terrible things, while being an absolutely necessary function of the

By J. Michael Lennon

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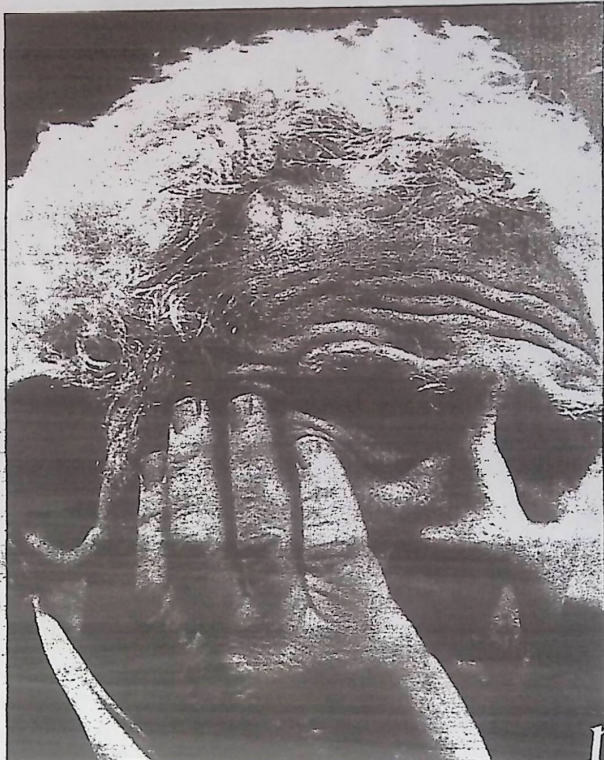
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Now, at age 69, Mailer is back and while "Harlot's Ghost" cannot justly be called an all-encompassing novel of American life, it does provide a privileged perspective on

J. Michael Lennon is a professor of English and executive director of the Institute for Public Affairs at Sonoma State University and the editor of three books on Norman Mailer. He is also a coeditor, with James M. Glin, of the recently published "The James Jones Reader."



Newsday photo

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Given the novel's stupendous length and ambition, and the fact that it is couched in the hopes and aspirations of the American Century, it seems likely that it will be measured against Mailer's 1959 statement that he wanted to "try to hit the longest ball ever to go up into the accelerated air of our American letter."

The key event of this whole period, and of the book, is the assassination. Later, Mailer says that Kennedy's death created a greater obsession in the thinking of Amer-

'I think the CIA has done terrible things, while being an absolutely necessary function of the American empire.'

cans than Lincoln's assassination. "It's a little bit like carrying a 5- or 10-pound impost on your back throughout the day, every day of your life."

Why was Kennedy the great obsession?

"Because we don't know who killed him," Mailer says. "And we don't know how it happened."

Would knowing dissolve the obsession? Mailer reflects on this for a moment.

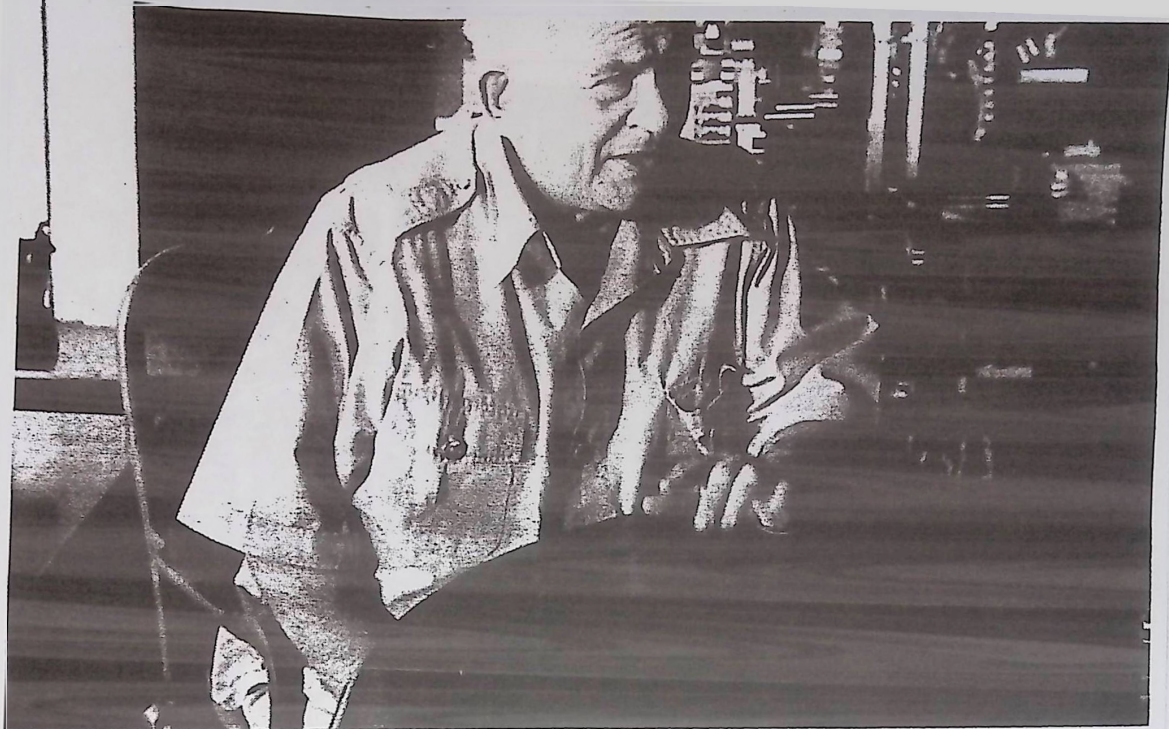


Photo by

Norman Mailer considers his new CIA novel, "Harlot's Ghost," which is being released this week, "one of my four best books."

For a review of "Harlot's Ghost," see this week's Books section.

comments before the interview. He allows, however, that the novel is "one of my four best books," along with "The Naked and the Dead" (1948) "The Executioner's Song" (1979) and "Ancient Evenings." After lunch we continue talking in his study. A mock-up of the dust jacket for "Harlot's Ghost" lies on a table heaped with dozens of reference books on the CIA, Russia, Cuba and the '60s. Summer light streams in the third-floor window. Below, the tide is beginning to turn.

Lennon—How do you describe your new book?

Mailer—I start by saying it's a novel about the CIA. I emphasize that it's not a spy novel. The characters are people who live and work in the CIA and some of them complain that their lives are not like a spy novel. At one point, one character says to another, "You know, it's as if we come in at the fourth chapter of a novel and we don't know what the first three are all about, and we don't know what the rest of the book is." My protagonist is a young man who years later writes the book in the form of

his memoirs. All of my life I've wondered what it would be like to be in the CIA. But Hubbard is not me; he's a WASP. He comes from a very good family and he grows to be conservative in his political opinion. I could never have been in the CIA because I was too radical when I was young.

Lennon—How did you handle your feelings of detestation of the CIA?

Mailer—Well, I've never detested it. I detest sentimental movies like "The Sound of Music" that make \$50 million. I was in awe of the CIA; I feared it; I was paranoid about it for many, many years. My feeling was that if I gave the most honest portrait of the CIA that I could, it would be, ipso facto, critical. Completely accurate portraits are always critical. But I didn't write the book with an edge.

Lennon—What are your feelings about the CIA?

Mailer—I think the CIA has done terrible things, while being an absolutely necessary function of the American empire. If you have a great, powerful country, then obviously you're going to have an intelligence organization. What makes it interesting is that the American intelligence organization is different. There's a tendency, I think, for

Europeans to compartmentalize their intelligence organizations. They expect very cold-blooded people to run them without a backward look, whereas we demand more morality from our intelligence officers. And so what you get are WASPs, who have been brought up to be incredibly ethical, out there doing naughty things, bad things, deceitful things, distorting history. And their sometimes delicate justifications come under the great umbrella of anti-communism. So there's a kind of implicit comedy of manners that goes on throughout the book. I don't mean it's a funny book, but there are a lot of smiles in it.

Lennon—What about the FBI? You've had a lot stronger feelings about the FBI.

Mailer—The FBI has been a bit of a brute in American affairs, an ugly brute. I think J. Edgar Hoover was despicable and maybe some of my bias shows. In fact, no one in the book refers to him as Hoover. They call him J. Edgar Buddha. Another thing is that relative to the CIA, the FBI had no manners. There was such a difference between the two organizations.

Lennon—Was one of your major intentions to present a mosaic of American social life in the '50s

and '60s?

Mailer—I think Let's put it this way: I'm writing a very long novel with many characters, have a lot of the period, willy nilly, twice about it. I take care of itself. My in the life of the At one point in the characters "Any man who successfully on his for espionage." V in is treachery is As you can see, are endless pern endless studies, agents exercising manipulating oil still feeling morose

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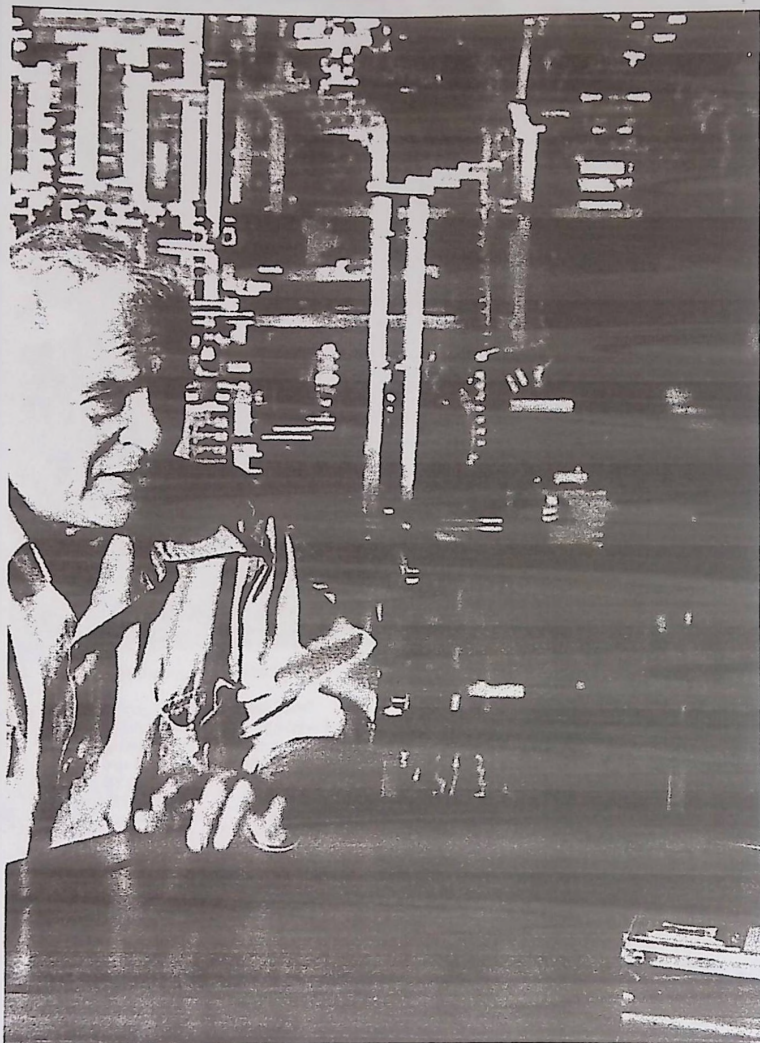


Photo by Nabokov/Gamita-Larson

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and '60s?

Mailer—I think it was secondary. Let's put it this way: If you're running a very long novel with a great many characters, you're going to have a lot of the social life of a period, willy nilly. I never thought twice about it. I knew it would take care of itself. My real interest was in the life of the intelligence man. At one point in the book one of the characters says to another, "Any man who has ever cheated successfully on his wife is equipped for espionage." What I'm interested in is treachery in human relations. As you can see, in this book there are endless permutations on that.

have keeping their sexuality under control. We often get obsessed with it and then we go off on a tear." This is a very unspoken drama in the CIA. Obviously no one from this organization is ever going to write about indiscretion in the ranks; they will feel it within the ranks, but it's never going to get out if they can help it. I've always been very amused by CIA novels that have this absolutely immaculate secrecy governing operators. Maybe there's one traitor, but he's absolutely uncharacteristic of the whole. But it seems to me that the way these things really work is with a mixture of high secrecy and violations of that secrecy.

Lennon—Your hero is wonderfully placed. His father, his godfather and the woman he loves are all high CIA officials. At one point he is sleeping with the same woman who sleeps with the President of the U.S., the head of the American mafia and Frank Sinatra. So he is certainly—talk about sexus, nexus and plexus—located where all the crossroads meet.

Mailer—If you want a vast novelistic canvas you have two choices. You can make it absolutely disjunctive and just move around like dogs from spot to spot, as I did in "The Executioner's Song." But I thought that a book like this had to have a point of view, and it had to be contained within one character's mind. Also, I was fascinated with something else, which is that Hubbard is in on everything that happens but not in the same way or to the same extent. One of my interests is epistemological—how do we learn what we know? And I think we could go through this book and find he never learns anything in quite the same manner.

Lennon—I thought it was a most Jamesian novel in its epistemology.

Mailer—I think it is. James frightened me forever with his dictum that one must never put information into a novel unless it is digested through the lens of a protagonist's perceptions. In "Harlot's Ghost," my protagonist is connected umbilically to the reader. If everything flows from one character to the reader, then there isn't that need for an intermediary, a narrator. Now in "The Executioner's Song," I felt I was entitled to a narrator because the information about Gary Gilmore and other characters is received information; I wasn't making it up.

Lennon—You use a remarkable number of real people. There must be about 20 historical characters with speaking parts.

Mailer—There's E. Howard Hunt, Bill Harvey; there's Allen



Photo by Nabokov/Gamma-Liaison

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Lennon—One thing that struck me was how indiscreet so many of the people were. Hubbard, the narrator, comments on it more than once.

Mailer—I think there will be CIA hands who will review the book and say, "This is ridiculous; this is absurd." But I tell you frankly I don't believe them. Maybe I exaggerated the indiscretion a bit, but not much. As one of my characters says, "Well, we have the same trouble keeping secrets that priests

whole. But it seems to me that the way these things really work is with a mixture of high secrecy and violations of that secrecy.

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Mailer—If you want a vast novelistic canvas you have two choices. You can make it absolutely disjunctive and just move around like dogs from spot to spot, as I did in "The Executioner's Song." But I thought that a book like this had to have a point of view, and it had to be contained within one character's mind. Also, I was fascinated with something else, which is that: Hubbard is in on everything that happens but not in the same way or to the same extent. One of my interests is epistemological—how do we learn what we know? And I think we could go through this book and find he never learns anything in quite the same manner.

Lennon—I thought it was a most Jamesian novel in its epistemology.

Mailer—I think it is. James frightened me forever with his dictum that one must never put information into a novel unless it is digested through the lens of a protagonist's perceptions. In "Harlot's Ghost," my protagonist is connected umbilically to the reader. If everything flows from one character to the reader, then there isn't that need for an intermediary, a narrator. Now in "The Executioner's Song," I felt I was entitled to a narrator because the information about Gary Gilmore and other characters is received information; I wasn't making it up.

Lennon—You use a remarkable number of real people. There must be about 20 historical characters with speaking parts.

Mailer—There's E. Howard Hunt, Bill Harvey; there's Allen Dulles, Helms, Kim Philby, Burgess, Bissell.

Lennon—The Kennedy brothers.

Mailer—David Phillips, the Kennedy brothers, all the Kennedy cabinet people. Gen. Lansdale is real.

Lennon—That's the government world, but then you've also got the Mob.

Mailer—The Mob: Giancana, Rosselli, Mayheu, Santos Trafficante, Cubela is real, Cubela who was supposed to assassinate Castro. In fact, the episode at the end of the book, where Cubela received the poison for Castro, and something like an hour later Kennedy was dis-

See Mailer, pg. 27



Mailer has long been obsessed by government and politics; in 1969, he ran for mayor of New York on a platform that included making the city the 51st state.

Mailer

Continued from page 19

sassinated, was one of the prodigious examples of serendipity in that world. And Castro's in the book.

Lennon—Castro is a character, but it seems to me there is a difference in how he is seen as opposed to, say, Hoover.

Mailer—There's no way that Hubbard can meet Castro; he only gets indirect, received information. People interpret Castro for him, tell him stories about their meetings with him. So I feel Castro becomes a character. One of the things I learned from "The Executioner's Song"—there would be these extraordinary people met while interviewing for the book, and I'd say, "Why the hell didn't God permit these two fascinating people to meet?" With all my novelist's training, I wanted certain people to meet. Well, when they sometimes did meet, the meeting would be as disappointing as hell. I kept realiz-

take her place which enabled me to explore certain aspects of her relationships with Kennedy and Giancana that I couldn't have if I had used her. Exner gave me the line of the engraving that I could follow. But Murphy is different in the coloration, different in the motivation, in her style of speech, different in a lot of ways.

Lennon—I thought the lunch between Kennedy and Hoover to be one of the finest things in the novel, how they tiptoe through the tulip bed of Kennedy's love relationship with Exner.

Mailer—It was like a ballet with each man holding a pistol. That's why Kennedy at the end says, "Give my regards to Clyde Tolson," who was Hoover's companion.

Lennon—Did they really have lunches like that?

Mailer—Historically, that lunch took place, and after that Kennedy cut off Judith Exner.

Lennon—You said it is an epistemological novel, but it's

Lennon—Modene Murphy tells Herrick Hubbard at one point that he is the first one that has ever brought her to orgasm. It struck me that you were elevating Hubbard a notch above some fairly renowned lovers, Jack Kennedy and Frank Sinatra.

Mailer—Well, you are assuming that Modene is telling the truth. All we have is her word for it; this is an epistemological novel. But this shouldn't seem extraordinary. I mean, I'm willing to believe her tale for the following reason, which is that women are not necessarily like men. A man can have an orgasm as quickly with a woman he despises as with a woman he loves dearly, in fact perhaps more quickly. Maybe Sinatra was a far better lover than Hubbard, but she might not be able to make it with Sinatra because she thought she would become his slave if she did. So in that sense I felt it was legitimate. Of course Hubbard takes it as a sign that he is a better lover than they are.

Lennon—The characters in "Harlot's Ghost" have, to use one of your favorite words, a very definable armature to their personalities.

Mailer—The people in this book are much more formed than most of my characters and that's because they're in the CIA. That makes for people who are highly formed. On the other hand, a couple of people in the book are not at all formed. Modene changes. Dix Butler, Hubbard's fellow agent, changes a lot.

Lennon—Can you say anything about Part Two?

Mailer—In a sense it's going to be about Watergate, about Vietnam and Watergate. Also about Russia; part of it takes place in Russia. And it will

greatest sculptor of the 20th Century.

Lennon—All you have to do is walk by the Cook County Building in Chicago. I have pondered the connection between the late Mayor Daley and that sculpture.

Mailer—Which one?

Lennon—It's right in Daley Plaza. It looks like a horse; it looks like a woman; it looks like Mayor Daley. It's a huge thing that he donated to the City of Chicago. It dominates

Daley Plaza. It's massive.

Mailer—He donated it, gave it free?

Lennon—I don't remember the details, but I think that he did donate it.

Mailer—Why would he give it free? What did Chicago do for him? I'm just curious because it would not be like him to give it away. I mean, he never even visited America. Maybe he liked Chicago. I'll have to check it out when I'm there this fall.

DENZEL
WASHINGTON

JOHN
LITHGOW

ICE T

He's a cop
accused of murder.
And the only man
who knows
he's innocent
is the killer
who framed him

RICOCHE

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Mailer

Continued from page 19

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Lennon—I think you were fair to Hunt, but you treated Judith Campbell Exner differently.

Mailer—I felt if I used the historical Exner I would be absolutely limited by her privacy. So I created another character—Modene Murphy—to

take her place which enabled me to explore certain aspects of her relationships with Kennedy and Giancana that I couldn't have if I had used her. Exner gave me the line of the engraving that I could follow. But Murphy is different in all the coloration, different in the motivation, in her style of speech, different in a lot of ways.

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Lennon—Did they really have lunches like that?

Mailer—Historically, that lunch took place, and after that Kennedy cut off Judith Exner.

Lennon—You said it is an epistemological novel, but it's also an epistolary novel to some extent. In fact, it has a higher percentage of letters and documents in it than "The Executioner's Song," maybe 25 percent.

Mailer—In the CIA, half of what is learned comes from documents. I felt it would give a much better picture of the life there if documents with their almost unendurable bureaucratic language were floating through all the time. To me, this is part of the comedy of manners at the CIA. Let me say another thing. There are very few departures in the book from historical reality. Not everything is historical, but there is a paradigmatic curve of the horizon of possibilities. I can name a couple of departures. One of them is where the CIA makes a facsimile of a manta ray, or a mantoid, to assassinate Castro. I felt I had written over 1,000 pages and I wanted to have a little fun.

Lennon—But not the fountain pen as an assassination weapon?

Mailer—The fountain pen is real. The assassination attempts on Castro are all real. All the major events in the book are real.

her tale for the following reason, which is that women are not necessarily like men. A man can have an orgasm as quickly with a woman he despises as with a woman he loves dearly, in fact perhaps more quickly. Maybe Sinatra was a far better lover than Hubbard, but she might not be able to make it with Sinatra because she thought she would become his slave if she did. So in that sense I felt it was legitimate. Of course Hubbard takes it as a sign that he is a better lover than they are.

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Lennon—Can you say anything about Part Two?

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Lennon—But you're taking a break to write a book about Picasso.

Mailer—I think I've got a book about Picasso—not a major book, but a good, interesting, short book.

Lennon—Is it going to be a complete biography?

Mailer—It will cover the life quickly, look at certain points.

Lennon—How much will you look at his works?

Mailer—I've spent six weeks looking at about 15,000 prints of Picasso's work, so I feel formidable.

Lennon—This isn't going to be one of those Norman Mailer projects that starts small and takes three or four years?

Mailer—I hope not; I absolutely hope not. There have already been a great many books about Picasso. And John Richardson is working on a four-volume biography. But I think I have an insight into him; there are a lot of parallels in our lives. He had many sides. He was a great pornographer; he was also a great sculptor. I know one very intelligent woman in France who says he was the

DENZEL WASHINGTON

He's a cop
accused of murder.
And the only man
who knows
he's innocent
is the killer
who framed him.

RICOCHET
This is one c

HBO IN ASSOCIATION WITH CINEMA PLUS, L.P. PRESENTS A SI
DENZEL WASHINGTON
JOHN LITHGOW "RICOCHET" ICE T
CO-PRODUCERS JAMES HERBERT AND SUZANNE
STORY BY FRED DENVER AND MERVIN MEYERS SCREENPLAY BY STEVE
DIRECTED BY RUSSE

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5 March 1992

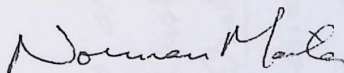
Dear Mr. Heaman,

That's a splendid letter from you and I've re-read it with care and am truly taken with your last sentence: "What is reality, anyway, and will the CIA or the novelists define it in the end?" It's curious: I happened to visit Langley the other day by invitation and spoke there, and had an interesting time, of course, but when it was all over, I felt somewhat less large than when I'd gone in. Mainly because the reality seemed to be smaller than my book. Perhaps it was the hint of something flat in the air, which could be due, also, I guess, to the prevailing sense there that with the end of the Cold War, so, too, are they diminished.

It was interesting to me that you spoke of the 19th Century novel because I had that in mind all the way through. It seemed to me that that was precisely what I was doing, writing a long, somewhat picaresque social novel that would attempt to define the time by the nature of its small events and its shifting codes of manners. I even called the novel a comedy of manners, which I must say, half of the major 19th Century English novels are to me. And so, yes, I agreed with many aspects of your letter.

Mike Lennon is a jewel of a fellow, if you can call a workhorse a jewel. In his case, I think you can. And his work at Wilkes University has the added advantage for me that I'll be able to see him more often.

Cheers,



Norman Mailer

RECEIVED

MAR 16 1992

WILKES UNIVERSITY
Exec. Ass't to Pres

Dear Norm,

11/6/92

Sorry to have been out of touch. Our move to Pennsylvania has been consuming. I'm heartily weary of the good-bye parties, fond farewells, remembrances. Of course, I'd be depressed if there were none. Busy, we have been.

I'm also depressed about the lackluster performance of Warlock's Ghost on the best-seller list. Americans are too lazy to lift what may be your masterpiece. I watched shoppers

- 2 -
at Sam's Walmart (where it sells for \$17.13) lift and heft and replace it in the pile. I almost think it would have done better if it took two hands to lift it. The weight and the drab, unimaginative dust jacket hurt sales badly. But everyone who I know that has read it, loves it. And, mind you, my friends take pleasure in telling me when they loathe one of your books.



- 3 -

Did you know that Henry James's New York Edition (published when he was in his late 60s) was a bomb? He got very depressed, then, started writing again. I've just been reading about James and Grant and Adams and Dana and Shelby Foote - the great un-fiction writers. Foote's 3-vol narrative of the Civil War is 2,400 pages. It sold slowly at first too.



- 4 -

1-6-92

How is Picasso coming?
Did you ever see the Chicago statue? Did I tell you it is his largest?
I hope to see you in a few weeks after I get settled in Wilkes-Barre. I'll call to see if you'll be free in mid or late February. I'd like to talk to you about your literary essays.
Enclosed is a list of

Sangamon
State
University
Springfield, IL 62794-9243



J. MICHAEL LENNON
Institute for Public Affairs
PAC 406
Phone 786-6576
Fax 786-6542

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1-6-92

Your interviews through
May 1991. I put it together
mainly for Bob, but thought
you might be mildly curious
about it.

Thanks for signing those
books for my friend. Best
to Norris and kids.

P.S. New Address

J. M. LENNON

Vice President, Academic Affairs
Wilkes Univ.

Wilkes-Barre, PA 18766

Thurs,

Michl

P.P.S. Can I have a couple of
red dust jackets?