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Mr. Gerry Armstrong
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Dan Sherman

Dear Gerry,

Let me begin by simply saying that I'm glad you wrote back; I hope you like the book; and I'm gratified to see that regardless of everything you haven't lost the literary wit. On the other hand, it hurts to see that you still hurt.. .what else can I possibly say? I'm sorry for the both of us.

I like to think/hope that we've both come a long way from last year---perhaps not full circle, but a long, long way. There were times, particularly at first, when I couldn't get the sense of injustice out of my head. Then it began to dawn on him that there was no such thing as injustice.. .there was only experience, and experience is what we write about.

Above all else that's how I now see myself---a writer. Mata Hari led to more exposure than any previous work: three pages in LA Times, full page in SF Chronicle, about fifty radio and cable TV interviews. I mention all this only to prove a point---victory is in the head. (They also tell me it may be a film...or at least rights have been sold.) Anyway, that's more or less why I wrote in the first place; I wanted you to see the product. Yes, there was a lot of pain, but at least there's this book. See what I'm getting at? It doesn't matter what they do to you, just so long as you can write about it. And as you know, the craft has it's own rewards...rewards which are greater than the experience that inspired it.

Dan Sherman

Now you ask me what happened. Okay, what happened? (Frankly I'm not sure how to answer, nor even what you need...but let's give it a primary shot while bearing in mind that during the worst of it (facing disastrous marital, legal and financial repercussions) I found myself believing that the only way to survive was to bend...which is to say that I supposedly agreed not to attack, abuse, barf upon or otherwise defame.. .bla bla bla. So this is between us, okay?

Now you ask me what happened, and I'm still not sure what happened. Nevertheless, let me try to put it down in sequence...like pictures on a time-track...or at an exhibition?

- 1) Immediate confusion...You call to say that tapes are a reality.
- 2) Long night on my feet...and realization that no friends are close at hand.
- 3) Freak-out, and I'm ashamed to say, withdrawl from responsibility.
- 4) Explosions on home-front as wife puts two and two together---running out of house at odd hours, odd messegas on answering machine, etc. Finally she blows whistle at Complex.
- 5) Wife under pressure.
- 6) Long, very long, marital and religious discussions.

Dan Sherman

7) Long period of gradual reconciliation including "peace treaty" style agreements.

8) Travel and domestic repair.

9) I am supposedly "salvaged."

10) Yet gradually begin to understand ultimate truth in this affair--the pen is indeed mightier than sword!

Now obviously the above is only the bare bones, but hard facts always yield bones...yes? Only experience gives us the flesh. I've been told by a presumably reliable source that our involvement with the Loyalists was a relatively minor facet of a substantially larger scam. Point of fact: it's my understanding that our involvement was actually a by-product (even unlooked for) of something entirely different. Then, of course, there's also the emotional end of things, which I guess tore me apart pretty bad for awhile. As far as your experience through it all, once again I'm not sure what to say. There were probably a lot of things that I should have done that I didn't do...and I'll probably feel empty about it for some time to come.

As for the present, well I'm working on a book about the American Revolution. It's set in Philadelphia, your town and New York. I don't know if I'll make it back there, but my publisher seems to think I should go.

Dan Sherman

In closing, I suppose I'm back again where I started...what can I possibly say now? I hope you like the book; I hope you understand why I had to get some distance; I hope you'll write back...and I hope this was at least some help.

Your Friend,



D/S