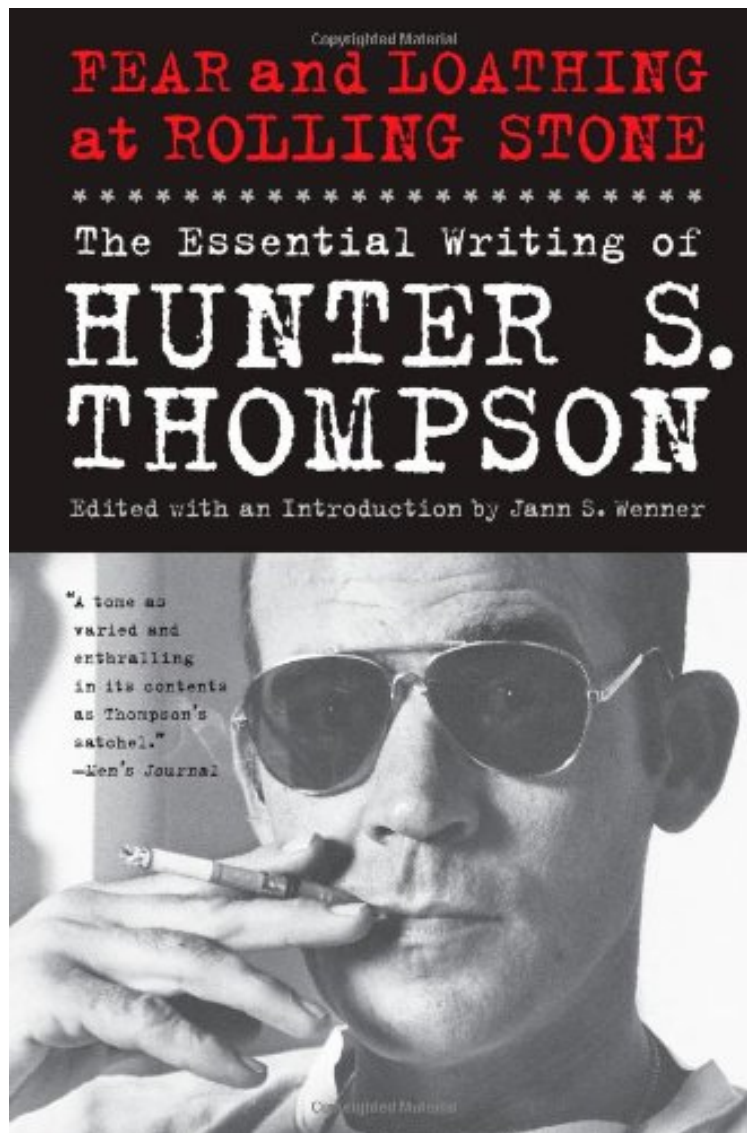


(Free and download) Fear and Loathing at Rolling Stone: The Essential Writing of Hunter S. Thompson

# Fear and Loathing at Rolling Stone: The Essential Writing of Hunter S. Thompson

*Hunter S. Thompson*

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**Hunter S. Thompson : Fear and Loathing at Rolling Stone: The Essential Writing of Hunter S. Thompson** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Fear and Loathing at Rolling Stone: The Essential Writing of Hunter S. Thompson:

151 of 151 people found the following review helpful. Avoid this HEAVILY EDITED collectionBy Rory FeehanThis book is an utter disgrace. It is far from "The Essential Hunter S. Thompson" as it is heavily edited throughout by Jann

Wenner and Paul Scanlon. So what the reader is getting is a chopped and butchered version of Hunter S. Thompson's original articles. We are not even talking about excerpts here, the articles in this collection bear no resemblance to the original writing. For example, Strange Rumblings in Aztlan has the entire first page chopped out, with this new edited version kicking off in the middle of a paragraph. To mask this Wenner and Scanlon have combined two of Thompson's sentences to start off the article. Yeah you read that correctly, the first sentence is a mutated piece of writing thanks to the hand of the editors. Fear and Loathing at The Super Bowl has pages upon pages cut from the original source, leaving an article that is disjointed and all over the place. The entire collection continues in this fashion with only 2-3 articles remaining untouched. I cannot fathom what Jann Wenner was thinking when he decided to take this approach with Hunter's writing. Thompson would never have tolerated such interference with his work and Wenner knows this only too well. The collection also claims to include letters and memos between the pair but the reality is that you get 50 short letters of little substance, some of which are already published in Fear and Loathing in America. Comparing the two, the reader will also discover that Wenner has edited the letters, as if butchering the articles wasn't enough. So at the end of the day, this book serves no real purpose. All of this work is already freely available in its original form, as Thompson intended, in both The Great Shark Hunt and The Gonzo Papers Anthology. So please avoid this disgraceful publication and purchase either of the above books instead. At least you know you will have the original work and not some piece of quackery from Jann Wenner, who should know better and wouldn't have dared pull such a stunt if Hunter was alive. I'd give this publication 0 out of 5 stars if I would allow me to do so, it is that bad. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Bits and Pieces By Doctor Moss This book is a kind of Hunter Thompson "reader." It contains abridged selections from the years of his association with Rolling Stone. At its best, it presents a "highlight package" assembled by Jann Wenner, containing pieces from Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas, Thompson's 1972 campaign coverage, Watergate, Fear and Loathing in Elko, correspondence between Wenner and Thompson, and other fragments. As a Thompson fan, of course I always enjoy reading his work. This book, though, by no means substitutes for reading the full length works and full sequences of pieces it is drawn from. If what you're in the mood for is in fact a retrospective cruise through work you're already familiar with, it's enjoyable. If instead you want to read the real Thompson, either for the first time or as a revisiting, then you're better off going to the originals. I do think it's a shame when publishers substitute abridged versions of already relatively short works, encouraging readers to satisfy themselves with less than the real thing. And the real thing is available in individual works. It's hard not to give a higher rating to anything written by Hunter Thompson, but the fault here is not his, but the very conception of the book. 25 of 25 people found the following review helpful. Edited? Good thing Hunter is no longer with us. By CHELSEA J MATHEWS If Hunter was still with us he would have hogtied and butchered the poor fools responsible for the raping of some of his finer work.

From the bestselling author of The Rum Diary and king of Gonzo journalism Hunter S. Thompson, comes the definitive collection of the journalists finest work from Rolling Stone. Fear and Loathing at Rolling Stone showcases the roller-coaster of a career at the magazine that was his literary home. Buy the ticket, take the ride, was a favorite slogan of Hunter S. Thompson, and it pretty much defined both his work and his life. Jann S. Wenner, the outlaw journalists friend and editor for nearly thirty-five years, has assembled articles and a wealth of never-before-seen correspondence and internal memos from Hunters storied tenure at Rolling Stone that begin with Thompsons infamous run for sheriff of Aspen on the Freak Party ticket in 1970 and end with his final piece on the Bush-Kerry showdown of 2004. In between is Thompsons remarkable coverage of the 1972 presidential campaign and plenty of attention paid to Richard Nixon; encounters with Muhammad Ali, Bill Clinton, and the Super Bowl; and a lengthy excerpt from his acknowledged masterpiece, Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas. The definitive volume of Hunter S. Thompsons work published in the magazine, Fear and Loathing at Rolling Stone traces the evolution of a personal and professional relationship that helped redefine modern American journalism, presenting Thompson through a new prism as he pursued his lifelong obsession: The life and death of the American Dream.

A tome as varied and enthralling in its contents as Thompsons satchel. Mens Journal Glorious . . . You can witness Thompsons development and deterioration unspool in real time. Matt Labash, The Wall Street Journal An American original. He hit the high notes out on the ragged edge, and thousands of us heard him above the canned din of the safe center. Los Angeles Times Wenner rolls out only the good stuff . . . You know what they say, If you got em . . . read em. Vanity Fair A reminder of how . . . in the right hands words are scalpels with which to both surgically excise and slash at the culture. Pittsburgh Post-Gazette About the Author Hunter S. Thompson was born and raised in Louisville, Kentucky. His books include Hell's Angels, Fear and Loathing at Rolling Stone, Fear and Loathing on the Campaign Trail '72, The Rum Diary, and Better than Sex. He died in February 2005. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Fear and Loathing at Rolling Stone Introduction Paul Scanlon When I first met Hunter S. Thompson in 1971, I didnt know what to expect. I was familiar with his work, of course, and had read the wonderful account of his campaign to become sheriff of Pitkin County (Aspen), Colorado, in the pages of Rolling Stone. He had been in Los Angeles working on a piece about the murder of newspaperman Ruben Salazar. There had been talk very vague

talk about his writing something about Las Vegas. Then, one fine spring day, he appeared in Rolling Stone's San Francisco office. For me, and the magazine, nothing would ever be quite the same. If you were a progressively minded college student in the 1960s, certain books were required reading: *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* by Ken Kesey, *A Confederate General from Big Sur* and *Trout Fishing in America* by Richard Brautigan, *The Kandy-Kolored Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby* and *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* by Tom Wolfe, and *Hells Angels* by Hunter S. Thompson. As an undergraduate majoring in journalism, I was drawn to the writing of Wolfe and a few others who were practicing what was not yet being called the New Journalism. It's funny, but even at an anti-liberal school like San Francisco State, there was a schism what was known in the day as a generation gap between faculty and students over this new kind of writing. Our professors considered Wolfe and his ilk poseurs, inspiring some kind of journalistic vaudeville by applying fictional techniques to reporting. We thought our instructors intended to mold us into drones, destined to carve out careers at small-town dailies. I guess it was my junior year when I pulled a copy of *The Nation* from the student lounge magazine rack and had my first encounter with the writing of Hunter Thompson. It was the first of his two-part report on traveling with the Hells Angels. The outlaw motorcycle club's Oakland chapter was a fixture in the Bay Area. Encountering a group of Angels was not uncommon, especially after they embraced LSD and began hanging out at dance-rock concerts in places like the Fillmore Auditorium and Winterland. Big Brother and the Holding Company became their official band. The rule of thumb was simple if you were nearby: keep your distance and try not to make eye contact. Even in their brief, acid-drenched benign phase, the Angels were downright scary, clearly capable of unpredictable violence. So it was a revelation to me that there was a writer who could figure out a way to win their trust and run with these characters. Hunter Thompson clearly had the smarts and the courage to do so. Or he was a hell of a salesman and a little bit crazy. Whatever. That early installment in *The Nation* convinced me he was the real deal. Later that day, I wondered aloud to my fellow campus newspaper staffers what our faculty advisers would make of him. *Rolling Stone* in the early 1970s was an exciting place to be. Social, cultural, and political unrest was in the air and we tried to cover that turbulence in ways that newspapers and newsweeklies did not. I was the managing editor for many of those years and was fortunate to work with some of the finest journalists in the land, including several on the magazine's masthead. My colleagues were a gifted bunch of renegades who had served apprenticeships in places like the *Los Angeles Times*, the *New York Post*, the *Detroit Free Press*, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, and the *Wall Street Journal*. Two of our most talented staffers came from the creative writing programs of San Francisco State and Stanford. Our first copy chief, who kept the place from coming unglued every two-week publishing cycle, was a Middle East scholar who had once roomed with Owsley Stanley III. We all shared a disdain for traditional, mainstream journalism and a penchant for hard work. When Hunter entered our ranks he quickly became, in many ways, our team leader. He had already established his credentials as an outlaw journalist, and the Salazar piece would demonstrate his investigative zeal. You had to like the guy. I think some of it came from his innate Southern charm and the contradictory fact that he was, well, a little shy. He was in town that spring to work on *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas, Part I*, and had set up shop in the basement of Jann Wenners' house. His visits to the office, a converted downtown warehouse with lots of exposed brick and wooden beams, were infrequent, but always memorable. Hunter was a big, hulking but graceful guy who clearly had charisma, and we responded to it. Standing about six-foot-two, usually clad in khaki shorts, high-topped sneakers, a baseball cap, and either a parka or a safari jacket, he'd amble into the office with a bowlegged quickstep, making the zigzagging, serio-comic, dramatic entrance we had come to expect. There was a big, round oak table in the middle of the editorial department, a sort of central gathering spot, where he'd plop down his leather rucksack, open it, and wordlessly proceed to remove the contents, which varied, but usually included something edible, like a grapefruit, a carton of Dunhills, a large police flashlight, a bottle of Wild Turkey, and a can of liquid Mace. Next, he'd open his mouth and speak. I called it Hunter-ese. His delivery was something akin to a lawn sprinkler or a Gatling gun, a rapid-fire baritone mumble that was hard to understand at first. But once you caught on to the rhythms, you realized he was spitting out perfect sentences. Late one morning, Hunter came in and handed some manuscript pages to a couple of editors and me, then turned and motored out with nary a word. He had given us copies of the first section of *Vegas*, and by late afternoon most of the staff had read and digested them. We were flat knocked out. Between fits of laughter we ran our favorite lines back and forth to one another: *One toke? You poor fool. Wait until you see those goddamned bats!* Delivered in Hunter-ese, of course. Between bouts of serious writing there was the usual goofing off and troublemaking. There were evenings of drug-fueled adventures that left more than a few staffers dazed and worn out. There were interesting characters who were part of his and subsequently our orbit, including Oscar Zeta Acosta, who was the model for the three-hundred-pound Samoan attorney in *Vegas*, and his sometimes sidekick, a fellow named Savage Henry. Early on we became familiar with Hunter's penchant for fright wigs, bizarre recordings of animals in their death throes that would somehow find their way onto the office public address system, and novelty store pranks. One evening Jann invited a few of us over to his place on some pretext or other. We walked in and saw Hunter standing there in a torn tie-dyed T-shirt covered in red splotches. Brandishing what looked like a giant horse syringe, he announced that he was going to inject 151 proof rum directly into his navel. He then jammed the needle into his belly and doubled over as he let out a series of wails and groans. One of my companions almost fainted. But the fun and games for Hunter and for the rest of us always took

second position to the work. We loved what we were doing, and none more than he. Once, reflecting on the scrambling years of his early career, he stated that he had no taste for either poverty or honest labor, so writing is the only recourse left for me. His tongue, of course, was firmly in his cheek. He was serious about his craft and was an ongoing student of correct grammar and syntax, and enjoyed sharing that knowledge. One of our staff writers was quite talented but often taunted for the sloppiness of his copy. I stood by one day as Hunter patiently lectured him on the necessity of producing a clean manuscript and how it would complement his writing skills (Hunter was right). In fact, he went out of his way to be friendly and helpful, even solicitous, about our work. Hunter would somehow get wind of what I was assigning and often I'd find on my desk a note in his distinctive scrawl suggesting a source or a contact. The notes were always signed: OK/HST. He had a gift to inspire, and he lifted everybody's game. He could have played the star, but the really good ones never do. Hells Angels brought notoriety, and his Kentucky Derby piece for Scanlans as well as the early Rolling Stone appearances received attention. He chose to be a friend and colleague, and we responded in kind. When the sloppy manuscript guy heard that Hunter used swimming as a way to relax, he escorted Hunter to a scuba school a couple of blocks away where he could do laps when the pool was free. When he was in town, Hunter became a low-key regular at Jerrys Inn, the staff watering hole across the street. He was very much at home there at the bar, and would love to engage us, one-on-one, in everything from his heroes, Scott Fitzgerald and Joseph Conrad; to classic sportswriters such as Jimmy Cannon or Red Smith; to the fortunes of the Oakland Raiders, the scruffy, mean-spirited pro football team on which he had a few friends. He also loved to talk shop, about articles we would read in Esquire and elsewhere, which I like to think validated a few of the hours we spent in Jerrys instead of in the office. When Hunter embarked on the 1972 campaign trail, it signaled the end of one chapter and the beginning of another for both him and the magazine. At first there was no real blueprint other than establishing a presence with an office in Washington, D.C. But he quickly found himself reinventing the mission statement almost issue by issue, and pretty soon the assignment had become an endless road trip. He was always writing against extreme deadline and filing copy at the last possible minute, which became a crucible for both him and the magazine. I was mercifully out of the direct line of fire, with too many other things on my plate. But I was close enough to feel the terrible weight borne by Jann, associate editor David Felton, copy editor Charles Perry, and a heroic production staff. The now legendary Mojo Wire sat just a few feet from my office door. Night after night, in the midst of deadline frenzy, that infernal thing would be beeping away, signaling Hunter's presence at the other end, while Jann or Felton stood by, waiting for the copy to be slowly ejected. It was as if he was always in our midst. And in the final accounting, those articles solidified Rolling Stone's commitment to political coverage, made Hunter a true celebrity (for good and ill), and eventually resulted in a great book. It was a miracle of journalism under pressure, and only Hunter could have pulled it off. A few months after the election we were sitting in Jerrys. Hunter looked like hell and was clearly not in great spirits. For reasons that will ever elude me, I decided to give him a helpful lecture. Retire your alter ego Raoul Duke, I said. Or send him on a long vacation. Go back to being the journalist who wrote Hells Angels. Cut back a little on the drugs and the booze. He turned toward me as he reached into the pocket of his safari jacket. He gave me a look; nothing nasty, just a look. He extracted a tab of Mr. Natural blotter acid from the pocket, stared me in the eye, and swallowed it. I got the message. Our conversation resumed. The last time I worked with Hunter was on his interdicted dispatch from a rapidly falling Saigon in 1975. We pretty much lost contact after that, although I'd occasionally run into him in New York. The last time I spoke to him was at a 1996 celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas and the simultaneous publication of a Modern Library edition, an acknowledgment of his work by the literary establishment of which he was justly proud. It was a splendid evening. A lot of Rolling Stone alumni were there, and among the guests was Johnny Depp, Hunter's great friend who would portray Raoul Duke, Doctor of Journalism, in the movie version of Vegas in 1998. One of my favorite memories of Hunter goes back to the spring of 1973, and it's actually on video tape. He had been sequestered at the Seal Rock Inn, on the western edge of San Francisco, finishing the final edits on Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72. A group of video journalists who had been assigned to do a documentary on Rolling Stone for public television had taped him at the hotel as he was preparing to leave, and he obliged them with a few minutes of classic Hunter S. Thompson gibberish and shtick. But when he got to the office to say his good-byes before heading home to Colorado, the video crew had preceded him and closed in, peppering him with stupid questions. Hunter and I tried to ignore them by poring over his fan mail, which in itself was something to behold. Finally, Hunter gave up. He started moving down the hallway, looking back over his shoulder at me, saying, I have to meet a guy across the street! By the time he reached the exit, he was shouting, I HAVE TO MEET A GUY ACROSS THE STREET! Across the street was Jerrys, naturally. The guy was me. Hunter was a terrific writer whose unique talent and enthusiasm helped propel Rolling Stone forward at some crucial points in its early history. He was a swell drinking companion, a hell of a salesman, and yes, a little bit crazy. Crazy like a fox. It's been forty years since Hunter Thompson embarked on the presidential campaign trail and almost seven years since he passed away, but somehow he still manages to consume many of us to this day. When I began work on this book, I figured his total output for Rolling Stone exceeded four hundred fifty thousand words. The main text, after some pretty serious editing, is still about two hundred ten thousand words. The selection process was easy: practically everything. Only four articles were omitted; they simply weren't up to par with

the other material. But this meant that cutting would be that much more difficult. The campaign trail material was the least difficult to work with. It was specifically geared to the moment, and much of it had simply ceased being topical. But there were plenty of vignettes and colorful incidents, and the overall reporting has held up remarkably well. A characteristic of Hunters writing is the long digression, or the shorter but carefully designed tangent. If a digression got in the way of the main narrative, out it came. The best example is Fear and Loathing at the Super Bowl. Almost half the article was a world-class digression on the Oakland Raiders, which had nothing to do with the contest itself. Of course if a digression or tangent was outrageously funny, it had to stay in. It would have been a crime to cut Hunters adventures riding the Vincent Black Shadow motorcycle. Such is also the case with Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas. The excerpt presented here is a stand-alone section from Part II in which Duke and his attorney have their way with a hapless delegate to the district attorneys conference. Curiously, the hardest article to cut was Hunters first piece for the magazine, The Battle of Aspen, which details his efforts to unseat the sheriff of Pitkin County, Colorado, through the use of Freak Power. I made a moderate initial cut, but the second time around I struggled and finally gave up. The damn thing was too intricate and dense. The arc of Hunters relationship with Rolling Stone is pretty clear looking at the table of contents. His output from 1970 through 1972 was amazing, and Watergate and all things Nixon kept him involved through 1974. But when he was dispatched to the Ali-Foreman heavyweight championship fight in Zaire that year, he returned empty-handed. His trip to Saigon as the Vietnam War wound down yielded an abbreviated, unfinished piece. A later excursion to Grenada yielded nothing. In the meantime, he had become and would continue to be a popular speaker on college campuses. The money was good and the appearances were plentiful. The writing just wasn't there, for long periods. When he would reappear in the pages of Rolling Stone, the results were often first-rate. In 1977, The Banshee Screams for Buffalo Meat was a paean to his friend and sometimes nemesis Oscar Acosta, who had apparently perished in a drug deal gone bad. His two-part profile and interview with Muhammad Ali the following year was insightful and hilarious. Who else would leap into Alis hotel room wearing an African fright mask, sending the Champ into gales of laughter? Another five-year absence ended with Hunters last great piece of reporting when he was sent to cover the sensational Roxanne Pulitzer divorce trial. A Dog Took My Place features Hunter at his best, exploring the sex-and-drugs culture of well-heeled Palm Beach denizens in wide-eyed amazement and disdain. The 1990s would produce two late masterpieces. Fear and Loathing in Elko is a sustained fantasia of nightmare imagery featuring Supreme Court justice Clarence Thomas and a cast of weirdos. It is mordantly funny and dark in fact much darker than Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas. Polo Is My Life would prove to be his last great piece of lyrical, expansive writing, involving his observations on a sport for the wealthy, the lost world of F. Scott Fitzgerald, and sex dolls. It should be noted that these two articles, like his first for Rolling Stone, were extremely difficult to cut. The correspondence between Hunter and Jann starts with their very first exchange in 1969. There are backstage looks at the writer as he works, how Vegas came to be, the evolution of the 1972 campaign coverage, story ideas (mostly discarded), and the push-me, pull-you faxes required to produce Hunters later work. Taken as a whole, the letters and memos are a kind of additional biography of the writer who did his signature work for Rolling Stone. In the Beginning... Hunter first wrote to Jann Wenner in January 1970, having already published his first book, Hells Angels, in 1966 to generally positive critical attention. Rolling Stone, then two years old, had gained national attention with a special issue on Altamont, the Rolling Stones debacle of a free outdoor concert in December 1969, at which the Hells Angels (incredibly, hired as security) terrorized the crowd, stabbing one spectator to death. Early correspondence between editor and writer danced around the possibility of a story about Terry the Tramp, an Angel who'd recently died, until Hunter casually mentioned his nascent campaign for sheriff of Aspen, Colorado. The Battle of Aspen both Hunters run for office and his account of it in the magazine inserted Hunter into the national conversation both politically and journalistically, and was the opening battle cry to an epic, righteous, and occasionally combustible partnership between Hunter and Rolling Stone. Undated letter from Hunter S. Thompson to Jann S. Wenner Owl Farm Woody Creek, Colorado Jann Wenner Rolling Stone Your Altamont coverage comes close to being the best journalism I can remember reading, by anybody. When I cited it to a friend who teaches at UCLAs journalism school he said he'd never heard of Rolling Stone... and that sort of says it all, I think, except maybe to speculate that the trouble isn't really with print, but with the people who control print. And that's an old bitch, too, so fuck it. Anyway, Rolling Stone makes [Marshall] McLuhan suck wind. It's a hell of a good medium by any standard, from Hemingway to the Airplane. People like [founder of the Los Angeles Free Press Art] Kunkin and [author-journalist Paul] Krassner never came close to what you're doing... so don't fuck it up with pompous bullshit; the demise of R.S. would leave a nasty hole. Which reminds me of that shitty ignorant slur you laid on Eric Von Schmidts last album, Who Knocked the Brains Out of the Sky? It's one of the few really original things I've heard in five years and Wooden Man ranks with the best of The Bands stuff. Whoever wrote that sleazy rap is a waterhead with a shit ear. Dismissing Von Schmidt as a bad rock artist is like comparing Lenny Bruce to the Hells Angels saying that Bruce didn't make it. Sincerely, Hunter S. Thompson Undated letter from Jann S. Wenner to Hunter S. Thompson 746 Brannan Street San Francisco 94103 Hunter: Thanks for your note. Having once read your Angels book in galley proof forms (stole them when I worked at Ramparts) and having really dug it in its pre-cut form, I've been a fan of yours. Glad you are now a fan of ours. So, good to get your note. The record review section has been a problem a lot of prep-school masturbatory reviewers

getting their rocks off in the past. Were weeding them out now, and bringing the section back under my control, so I apologize for past idiocies in that part of the paper. How about doing something for us? What have you been writing lately? Send it to me. Maybe we can use it, or maybe you have some ideas for some new stuff. Let me know. Two items for your interest: 1) We submitted Altamont (plus groupies, ups, Dylan, etc.) for a Pulitzer. I doubt it will happen, but what the hell; and 2) I found out yesterday that Terry the Tramp committed suicide sleeping pills she wanted to quit the Angels after Altamont, and that's how he did it. I think we'll be having a good story about it. Would you be interested in adding your thoughts? Hope Woody Creek is as beautiful as it sounds. Sincerely, Jann Wenner

Letter from HST to JSW Owl Farm Woody Creek, Colorado Feb 25 70 Dear Jann... Thanx for the note good luck with the Pulitzer gig. If I had a vote you'd be in good shape... but you'll be dealing with a gang of crusty shitheads, so don't let it worry you if they don't give you a medal. And even if they do it'll probably be for the wrong reasons. About writing something: Your news about Terry the Tramp depresses the shit out of me. When I think of all those worthless mean-souled fuckers who should commit suicide, it's rotten to hear that Terry was the one who did it. I have hours of tape-talk with the bastard I was listening to them tonight remembering how he always knew that Angel thing was a bad trip how he wanted to get out of it... but he never knew how, or where to go. He was the only one of the Angels I ever felt next to for long enough to consider him a friend. I kept expecting him to show up out here I'd have been happy to see him but he never did. And now, looking at your letter, I don't mind knowing he's dead so much as I hate to think of him sitting around deciding to do it. He should have gone out at about 120, head-on with a cop car. That's what he was looking for; and it's a bitch to know he had to go out on his knees. Anyway, I'd like to write something about him. Maybe a long thing because thinking about him puts me back in a scene that's beginning to look very rare. San Francisco in the mid-Sixties was a very special time... and Terry, to me, was a key figure. I remember taking him down to the Matrix to hear the Airplane before they ever got into the Fillmore... then taking him down to La Honda to meet Kesey... and those fuckarounds with the Berkeley peace freaks. So probably I could write a decent thing about him as a freak-symbol of an era he never quite understood. What do you have room for? A short obit... or a long rambling truth-nut? Let me know quick if you need it quick and also say what you pay. I'll write the fucker anyway, if there's room, but I tend to bear down a little harder when I smell money. Whatever you think: I'll do a short obit (say, 2500 words) for nothing... or a long (1015,000 words) for money. I'd like to get into it, and it fits with the long-overdue book I'm supposed to be finishing right now for Random House... so if you can use a long piece it's no problem. Shit... I sound like a pawnbroker here (or a speed-dealer), but in fact there's no point in my zapping off a huge chunk of esoteric madness that nobody can use. I've done that all too often, and it gets old... OK for now... and in any case keep R.S. on its rails. We are heading into a shitstorm on all fronts. Ciao, Hunter

Also send any details or news clips about Terry like if there's a funeral, etc. They would help if I do anything long or serious

Thanx Letter from JSW to HST March 30, 1970 Hunter Thompson Owl Farm Woody Creek, Colorado Dear Hunter: Sorry for taking so long to get back to you but just before your letter arrived I went to London for awhile and I've just gotten back. In the meantime, Terry the Tramp has passed from memory and we have received a beautiful piece by one of our writers in London, Chuck Alverson. I think we will be using this piece for a special issue we will be doing this fall about the Sixties. This obviates the need for the Terry the Tramp piece. However, I would like you to write some things for us. You say you're working on a book right now for Random House, and if Terry the Tramp fits into it, perhaps then something from your book would fit into Rolling Stone. Maybe you could send us the chapters or some chapters, and maybe we could run some of it. I'd enjoy reading them in any case. Best regards, Jann Wenner

Letter from HST to JSW Owl Farm Woody Creek, Colorado Apr 10 70 Dear Jann... OK, I'll try to let you know whenever I have something suitable for R.S. God only knows when, or what, it will be. Between running for Sheriff and getting this new Wallposter off the ground, I don't have much time for heavy writing. But I have to do it or else start looking around for a job; so I'll get something together pretty soon. Meanwhile, how can I get on the list for the Earth Times [Jann had recently launched an environmental publication with this title]? Whose running it? If it's you, write me in bill me, or we can trade straight across for 12 issues of the Wallposter which is on firm enough footing at least until next Nov, when we plan to bring everything to a terrible climax. Until then, the WP is our forum. I'm enclosing the first two issues, FYI. What I'm hoping for now is just sending out all kinds of queries, hoping to come up with a few good ideas about printing and distribution before June, when we'll have to get down to serious twice-a-month publication. So if you have any ideas mainly about how to sell this thing on the coast, or maybe a name or so of some distributors, I'd appreciate hearing from you pretty soon. Thanks for anything you can send. And meanwhile, put me on the list for the Earth Times. Ciao... Hunter S. Thompson

In re: Chuck Alverson in London he's an old friend of mine from the SF era he did one of the first big magazine stories on the Angels (in True) say hello when you see him. Letter from JSW to HST, April 16, 1970 Hunter S. Thompson Owl Farm Woody Creek, Colorado Dear Hunter: Thanks for your letter. Something suitable for Rolling Stone: how about the tale of your campaign to be elected Sheriff? That would be beautiful. Wallposter is a gas. There's nothing I can do for you in the way of distribution, but if you would like to sell a lot of single copies through the mail at 25 cents each, we could give you a plug in Random Notes. Enclosed are the first two issues of Earth Times. I'd really love to have your first-person piece on running for sheriff. It sounds like it would be beautiful, especially with a lot of general material about Aspen and the scene there worked into it. How

about 2500 words? Best, Jann Wenner P.S. Chuck Alverson is now traveling around the Mediterranean for us, doing a special issue on the hashish trails. Hell be in San Francisco in August, and would probably love to see you. Letter from HST to JSW Owl Farm Woody Creek, Colorado Apr 23 70 Dear Jann... OK... but first let me explain the X-factors in both the Sheriffs campaign piece and the 25-cent Wallposters. First: I saw that photo/caption in the last issue of R.S. about the lad who was running for sheriff of Virginia City and although it sounds fine, that scene is a long way from ours. This one is getting very grim.... and our real opposition goes by names like 1st National City Bank of NY, First Boston, and the Aspen Ski Corp. with directors like Rbt. McNamara, Paul Nitze other Washington heavies. What weve been trying to do since we lost last Novembers mayoral race by six (6) votes is seize control of what the opposition regards as a working gold mine. And it is. The idea that a 29-year-old bike-racer head almost became the Mayor of Aspen last fall has put the fatbacks in a state of wild fear; at the moment theyre trying to pass a new City Charter that would disenfranchise most of our voters also bar most of our candidates from running for office. Soto destroy this New Charter we have to mount a serious campaign almost instantly. The charter election (Yes, or No) is in June. And if we can beat them on that, I think we can generate a fucking landslide in November not only in the Sheriffs race, but also in the crucial County Commissioners contest and also for the ballot proposition to change the name of Aspen, officially, to Fat City. This would wreck the bastards, and give us working control of the whole county.\* Anyway, I trust you see the problem both in timing and magnitude. My sheriffs gig is just a small part of the overall plot, which amounts to a sort of Freak Power takeover bid. It began last Nov. and wont end until Nov 70. So maybe you should ponder the timing of any article; For my own purposes, Id rather do it sometime this summer, like August, when were well underway. Or I can wait until after its over... although chances are that Ill be somewhere in Chuck Alversons territory by that time, if I lose. If I make a serious run at the sheriffs thing, Ill either win or have to move out. Thats the tradition here and itll be especially true in my case. Last summer was heavy with violence, and this one looks nine times worse. Last year the dynamite action didnt even start until mid-July, but this year its already heavy in April... and last falls near-miss election has given the local freaks a huge shot of confidence for whatever lies ahead. So... on the Sheriffs Campaign article, Im inclined to look at it as part of a far larger thing. If Freak Power can win in Aspen, it can win in a lot of other places... and in that context Id just as soon do the article fairly soon, maybe in time for August publication, so that what weve learned here might be put to use somewhere else, before November. The important thing here is not whether I win or not and I hope to hell I dont but the mechanics of seizing political power in an area with a potentially powerful freak population. (As a passing note, there, I suppose I should say that if I do win, Ill serve out the term although not without the help of a carefully selected posse and a very special crew of deputies, most of whom are already chosen and working to register my constituents.) We found, last fall, that registration is the key to freak power. And so much for all that. I can do the piece sooner, or later; Id prefer sooner, but what the hell? Were into it anyway, and by autumn a hell of a lot of people are going to be leaving this town: The only question is Who theyre going to be. \* \* \* Well... 3 days later now, Ive just talked to [Ramparts and Scanlans editor] Warren Hinckle about doing a piece on the Kentucky Derby for Scanlans. Im leaving in a few hours for Louisville, so I want to get this off quick. Right now the political balance looks about 40/60 against us but thats without the crazed brilliance that well naturally bring to any serious effort we decide to make. So I figure the real balance, right now, is roughly 50/50 which means, if we dont make any serious mistakes, well probably control the town the county by November of 1970. This includes the Sheriffs race, the (more important) County Commissioners race, and also the referendum to change the name of the town to Fat City. Meanwhile, we are being sued by the County Attorney, who claims that Wallposter #1 forced him to quit his job. He wants more money than the Meat Possum Press Ltd. [Hunters loose collective of like-minded freaks] can ever earn, so fuck him we welcome his action. In WP #4 we intend to go for his throat goad him on to further frenzies. So thats it for now; Im off to the Derby. Let me know when youd like the Sheriff article and write the Random Notes Wallposter note however you see fit; well honor it. OK... Hunter Undated letter from JSW to HST 746 Brannan Street San Francisco 94103 Hunter: Aspen story as is sounds great. I would dig it at length, long really, maybe 5000 words, whatever it is worth once you write it on the whole thing. Last years elections, this years, the dynamite things, all the local color and personalities. It sounds superb for us. I would like it in June to run in July or something. I dont want to wait until its over. Id like the story while it is still in progress. If you know of a local photographer, then wed like him on the story as well. If not, well send our own photographer. The whole thing really moves me, as freakpower or whatever you call it, but the story of how young turned-on people are trying to take over the town in a regular election in Aspen, the Aspen scene in general for a while, the specifics of the election, who is running against whom, the reaction of the local gentry. And registration. Your story in RS should be part of the larger effort to get everyone to register for 1972. So do it. We can use it as soon as you finish it. Rate is 5 cents a word. Let me know on the photos. Jann Rather than plug the Wallposter now, lets get it with the issue we run the above piece. Letter from HST to JSW Owl Farm Woody Creek, Colorado June 1 70 Dear Jann... OK, back now from the Derby recovering from a massive fuck-around with Wallposter #4 due at the (Denver) printer in 4 days, and nothing written. Not even a cover and my art partner, Tom Benton, is in the hospital for a shoulder operation. So things are jangled here. Selah. On the Aspen/politics piece, Ill aim at getting it to you around mid/late June. One of the main problems is that anything I write in RS is going to get back here pretty quick, so I have to consider that aspect before I get it on.

Our county commissioner candidate hasnt been told, yet, that hes it... and I want to get him solidly committed before I announce for sheriff. Otherwise, he and our whole liberal/money gang will freak right out and leave me running a straight Freak-Power shot; and that wont work. The dropout Head mentality is a maddening thing to work with; they dont know Kent State from Kent cigarettes, and frankly they dont give a fuck. But Ill get a decent piece out of this scene for good or ill. Lets look at June 20 or so. As for photographs, we have some competent locals but they dont give a fuck either but lets wait a while until you send somebody out. July 4 is always a bitch here: Violence, bombs, bikers, posses with shotguns, etc. So if I cant root up a batch of good photos by July 1, maybe you should send somebody out who can do this scene with a fresh eye. There are one or two local photogs who could get the stuff pretty easily, but if I cant prod them out of their lethargy wed be better off with somebody interested. Ill let you know. But frankly Id just as soon have one of your people come out. Otherwise, Ill have to ride herd on the local fuckers do everything for them except push the button. (And in fact I might do that. I used to take pictures for half a living. No reason why I shouldnt make a run at it this time... and if my own stuff bombs we can always use one of your people.) Anyway, the thing is cooking. My only real problem is how to write it without screwing myself to the floor in November. Well see... Sincerely, Hunter \* weve just rented a large mid-town office a log building with huge windows