Hansen graciously says kind things about me, and I thank him for them. He then accuses me of a series of errors.

It is odd to reread his well-written paragraphs. Two years ago, after he mailed me a copy of the same accusations, I wrote him a long letter to set the record straight. He seems to have disregarded the letter; his wording now is almost identical with what it was two years ago. Let me try again to set the record straight, this time beginning with that worst, last item on his list.

He writes—he still writes!—that I "gave no citation" in a 1984 review article about PK. This would be very bad if it were true, but it seems true only because it is taken out of context. Here's the context.

Krippner's series, Advances in Parapsychological Research, includes several reviews of PK research that I wrote. My later reviews refer to earlier ones, then describe recent work and discuss some theoretical issues; they naturally do not repeat the earlier reference lists. Hansen quotes, from the 1984 review, part of a paragraph under the subhead "Background." The background for his excerpt came (as I wrote him two years ago) from the 1982 review, where the details and reference are on p. 119. There may be other sins that I unwittingly committed, but I am innocent of that one.

Let us take the Serios pictures next because, if they are valid, they have such important theoretical implications. Hansen and I differ in our opinions on them; I will preface a discussion of Hansen's specific point with some reasons for my opinions.

The pictures seem to show that Serios could affect photographs by PK, sometimes also using ESP to identify a target. Eisenbud describes precautions against Serios's trickery. In some cases those precautions would not have sufficed if Serios were a skilled magician. Hansen therefore rejects the whole body of Serios material.

This seems to me to go too far. Consider, for one thing, that even when he was sober, Serios was not a skilled magician. For him, the precautions were probably often (perhaps always) adequate; and if they were adequate even once, Eisenbud has found James's white crow.

Add to this probability something else I find impressive; that as Serios drank more and more beer in the course of an evening and therefore must have become less competent physically, the pictures of his psychic photography became better. Add also something else that impressed me: TV clips that Eisenbud showed at a PA convention. A TV crew whom Eisenbud (a psychiatrist experienced in diagnosis) described as skeptical and somewhat hostile pointed their camera at Serios's face. At first the face was clear, but successive frames showed a faint mist in front of it, then more mist and still more, until the face was obscured. That did not look like a Serios trick, though perhaps Hansen might suggest that the studio tampered with the record. (Eisenbud shows other pictures from the session in the Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research, 1970, 64, 261-276~. Apparently he considered the episode so run-of-the-mill among Serios phenomena as not to be worth journal publication.)
Now to the specifics: When I chaired the Program Committee for the 1990 PA convention, there was a poster (not a paper, as I pointed out to Hansen two years ago) about Serios that I approved for convention presentation. It proposed a unique analysis of the Serios photographs. Its argument was that sometimes, when a picture approximated a target but was inaccurate, the picture would show veridical details of the target's background. This had not previously been studied. Selected examples supported the argument. Hansen finds it surprising that I voted for the presentation. The new argument and new evidence seemed (and still seem) to me to be worth a hearing.

Hansen mentions disapprovingly a paper accepted for the same convention. The ESP subject was Olof Jonsson, whose earlier behavior Hansen thought suspicious. Hansen does not mention that in this study, the targets were in America. Jonsson was in Europe; he made his responses by intercontinental telephone. Trickery here would require connivance by someone conducting the research; and Hansen does not suggest that any investigator's behavior was (to use his own word) "suspicious."

Hansen also disapproves my having voted to accept for PA presentation a paper by Cox. Here we have a legitimate difference of opinion about a general issue: the purpose of the annual PA convention. Some think of it as a showpiece for parapsychology, where only the best of current work should be presented. Others, including me, think of it as an annual opportunity for those of us seriously interested in parapsychology to present our ideas and get feedback on them; to hear and benefit from our peers' criticisms. This means that even though, of course, I reject research that is clearly defective, my standards for acceptance are lower than the standards of those who want the convention to be a showpiece.

For the mind-boggling incident with Delmore, I still do not see how that particular occasion could have involved a card trick. When I described the details to Hansen and asked how a trickster might have done it, he did not respond, and his silence left me wondering whether he knows or has an answer and chooses not to tell me, or whether he does not have an answer. But though this is of personal interest to me, it does not matter. It does not bear on the important question of the validity of the formal Delmore research.