

December 4, 1963 - Page 2 Con't.

On June 3, 1961, the Supreme Court overturned the conviction. Justice Potter Stewart, speaking for the court, said Rideau was denied constitutionally guaranteed due process of law when he was refused a change in venue. Stewart said: "The people of Calcasieu Parish (where the trial was held) had been exposed repeatedly and in depth to the spectacle of Rideau personally confessing in detail to the crime with which he was later charged.

"For anyone who has ever watched television, the conclusion cannot be avoided that this spectacle, to the tens of thousands of people who saw and heard it, in a very real sense was Rideau's trial -- at which he pleaded guilty to murder.

"Any subsequent court proceedings in a community so pervasively exposed to such a spectacle could be but a hollow formality . . . due process of law in this case required a trial before a jury drawn from a community of people who had not seen or heard Rideau's 'televised' interview." Is not your case similiar?

I continually wonder about you, Jack, and sense that the public exposure that you received on Sunday, November 24, 1963, could, in a "very real sense" be considered in your trial in which, by killing that 'ugly' Oswald in public view "your evidence of guilt?"

I read as many papers (national and local) as I possibly can each day. So far I have read no indication that your lawyers will seek a change of venue or even try to defend you against a charge of murder as such. Do you have the best legal counsel possible?

If any man deserved to breathe the breath of life, it was not John Fitzgerald Kennedy, but it was in my opinion, Lee Harvey Oswald. If any man deserved a family, the presidency, and recognition for a job so well done, I agree with you . . . it was John Fitzgerald Kennedy. He died in the course of duty, by a hatefull killer, not for you or me alone, but for all mankind! We lost a man so courageous and so full of natural genius, that few could surpass him, if any. Gone is the man who brought so much joy to so many. Gone is the devoted husband and gone is the father who dearly loved. Gone is OUR President, but his loving, courageous, devoted, valiant, intelligent, and unbiased spirit will live in our hearts until the day when our spirits will mingle eternally with his. He died for OUR cause. Now, Jack, you and I must continue to live for his.

I hope that I may have helped you to some degree by quoting the foregoing case. I can readily understand that when you harbored a grudge against Oswald and wished an evil to befall upon him that you would act as you did. Many other people I'm sure would have attempted this same act at one time or other. After this tragic event on Friday, November 22, 1963, I hated this adversary and thought he should hang his head in shame and do penance for his guilt. And Jack, I can only share equal blame for the act that you are now imprisoned for, for I felt the same as you.

I do hope, Jack, that you will answer my letter. Since you are constantly in my thoughts and prayers, by replying I will then know that you received this letter and I will then feel that perhaps I have in some small way helped you to become stronger in the trying months ahead.

Regards,

*A. C. Stiller*

25A-170