

1 February 1967

Dearest Maggie,

A brief account of last night's TV taping Lane vs Nizer Jenner Scobey. I arrived shortly after 7 p.m. and they had not started—and did not, until almost 8:30, running to about 1 a.m. I had brought for Lane two tapes, Nizer and Jenner, in case he was challenged on his account of their atrocious misrepresentations or lies; also various documentary material. I was able to help him with information and suggestions during several breaks or recesses; but I know, speaking most objectively, that he would have done an outstanding job without backup of any kind. He was as always extremely resourceful, articulate, and most impressive (he did make two errors, not serious ones, and did acknowledge them afterward, criticizing himself, which made me feel greater respect for him). In a word, I think Lane won hands down—so did all the studio personnel and David Schoenbrun, who was an excellent moderator.

Nizer and Scobey were contemptible, ignorant, and stupid. They made complete fools of themselves. Surprisingly, Jenner was most restrained and avoided completely the ad hominem attacks, smears, innuendos. This is not to say that he was accurate nor that he was honest—he refused to take any position on a question of a revolver bullet, although he KNEW Nizer was completely wrong and Lane was right and although Lane appealed to him to indicate the facts. And he refused to comment on Lane's rendition verbatim of his statement about all of them seeing the autopsy photos or the charge that he was in total conflict with all other WC spokesmen. Afterward, though, he came to sit next to his daughter, who was directly in front of me, in the spectators' section—she said, now which is it, did you or didn't you see the autopsy photos? (She and her husband were surprisingly impartial and seemed almost ~~um~~ to be cheering for Lane, so much so that my niece and I thought for a while that we were mistaken about her daughterhood to Jenner.) Jenner then shook his head, negatively, that he had not seen the photos. This—imagine it!—after he had sat before the cameras and denounced the critics for being "irresponsible"!

The only "new" item which came up, and which was supposed to electrify everyone and make Lane fold up his tent and slink meekly away, was an "authorized statement" on behalf of the Senators Kennedy (not dated), viz: "The Warren Report was prepared by highly competent and respected people after intensive study, and there is every reason to have confidence in their findings." Nizer had obtained this statement apparently with authorization to read it on the program, and he thought he had really made a killing. But no one was impressed, especially not Lane.

Another particularly good mark Lane must get is for his reply to Nizer's vicious smear of the critics as guilty of "besmirching" the good name of the country, the govt, Warren et al. Lane responded that, leaving himself aside, the critics were courageous principled people to whom in due course the country would pay the homage they deserved—"people like Sylvia Meagher, Penn Jones, Maggie Field, Ray Marcus, Leo Sauvage..." I thought that was a fine step ahead for to the best of my knowledge Lane has always made a particular skill of managing to avoid reference to any other writer critic or researcher. We were joined after it was over by a blond woman who had been with Lane when I met him two months ago on the radio program—whom I took that time, and again last night, to be Mrs. Lane. To my mortification, it turned out that she was Barbara Leroy, a publicity agent—so I guess I have not yet seen Mrs. Lane, as I thought I had. We adjourned to P.J. Moriarity, a famous place to which I had never been before, and of course ran into Barry Gray, also Leonard Lyons (who looks like a cadaver). I find I am a frightful inverted snob—and it will get worse. Enclosures are self-explanatory—please write, or call, or I'll call you if events warrant. Much love, dear, Hurriedly, Sylvia.