

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, innuendoes. 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 ~~as~~ 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.

Later

I was interrupted by a phone-call from Lane; my boss, for a long and totally unnecessary "consultation," and then lunch with Lane, who came to my office. We had a very pleasant, harmonious few hours and I gave him Jenner and Nizer material for his TV confrontation with them tonight (it is being taped for later broadcast). But he pressed me also to come to the studio; he had tried to get me on the program (without asking if I was willing to be on, which I was not) but the format was already fixed at 3 to 1 (ie Lane vs Nizer Jenner and Alfreda Scobey). So now he wants me to be there, to "take notes" and brief him during the breaks. It is rather a dizzying leap from non-communication to the role of research assistant or first lieutenant and I am not quite ready for it, although Lane behaved quite well, even picked up the lunch check. I told him that I could not be there for the start in any case, at 5:30, since I work until 6 p.m. and that I had to go home first, which I do; but that I would come along as soon as I could. Considering how splendidly Lane has managed for years all by himself, ie, as on the recent BBC fiasco (in the sense that they were brutally unfair to him, and deliberately refused to let him speak, only to spark the wrath of the British public and their sense of fair play, flooding the switchboards with protests) I am sure he does not really need any support tonight --but I'll go for part of it at least.

Confidential section (resumed)

And this person is tied with exiles cloaks and Carbonieris. Now re: Z-50, he did show, but had nothing but a lot of garbage, mainly, personal scandals. He tried two trial balloons--(a) hinting at rightists and (b) hinting at opposite of European vintage. And we had the impression that he was not really even after \$\$ but to give a message between his lines, the message being, don't poke your nose too far, you can disappear, you can be swatted like a mosquito. Neither V nor I were very impressed by what we think was meant as a warning, a warning to V (consider how specific his public statements, like the one Mort read in full). It's interesting and useful, showing that V is on the right track.

I must run this minute or I will never get to my duty station at the TV studio. Sorry this is so disjointed and disorderly but I hope you can decipher enough to get a real life out of developments, as I certainly got one.

Much love, dear, to you
and yours (human and canine),