

23 April 1969

Dear Max,

I have not wanted to tell you the whole story behind my break with A. but I have no intention of allowing you to remain under a completely false impression. It was not a loan that was involved but the outright gift of a large sum of money, one-third of everything I had ever managed to save and more than the sum of all my earnings on Accessories, the Subject Index, paid articles, etc. The money was given outright in order to save TMO, back in July 1967, on A.'s explicit statement that the situation was desperate and that he had been unable to raise the needed money anywhere.

In addition to my own contribution, I contacted others and asked them to help out. One person sent \$1500 marked "loan" but A. promptly returned it, with a very correct but nevertheless cutting note of thanks saying that TMO was not in a position to incur debts. The person in question then sent the check back to A., this time as an outright gift. It goes without saying that in encouraging this contribution, I acted in absolute good faith, and that I now feel some moral responsibility, in the light of the discovery which gave me an indescribably terrible jolt earlier this year.

I had agreed to return mss., answer letters, and take care of other residual TMO or personal odds and ends for A. upon his departure for Israel early in December. After Ruth also left, their mail was redirected to me. In opening this mail, I found several banks statements reporting interest earned in 1968 on savings, from which interest at five percent compounded it was inescapable that the principal in these savings accounts was very substantial--many times the total of my savings at the time I had given A. a large check on the clear premise that he had no funds of his own. These accounts were personal ones, in the name of A. and/or his wife. What is more, other mail requesting his proxy revealed that he was also the owner of stocks.

When A. returned and I confronted him with these financial reports and proxy request, he told me that the money and the stock belonged to his friend and benefactor in Israel, the same man who regularly took care of certain of A.'s personal expenses (of which I knew and about which I had nothing to say and no reason to say anything). This explanation I considered wholly lacking in credibility, partly because A. was unable to reply to the most elementary and salient questions about the alleged arrangement (e.g., what would happen in the event of the sudden death of one of the parties? what safeguards had been instituted to make sure that the money would revert to the owner or his estate? etc.); and partly because of other information which A. probably did not know I had and which was completely incompatible with his claims about the ownership of the funds and the stock. I cannot detail that information without involving other parties, against their will, so I will have to ask you to attach your own value to my assurance that I did have such information.

That is the real story of what happened, and not the version you were given. I have felt no obligation to conceal or to advertise the facts, since A. has in any event left this country. But I prefer not to make this story known gratuitously. I will therefore ask you to give me your solemn word of honor that you will not relate these facts or hint at them in any manner, shape or form to anyone, whatsoever the circumstances. Do not fail me, Max.

Sincerely,

