

18 January 1967

Dear Philippe,

Thanks for your letter of the 16th, received with amazing speed today. I agree completely with your remarks about Schiller. Actually, despite your restrained remarks when I asked you about him--quite properly restrained, since there were ethical considerations involved--my instinct in itself was sufficient to cause me to disassociate myself from him and his companion, a man with icy eyes who belongs in some ugly job for FBI or the like. After our initial meeting I felt so soiled by their very presence that I wrote a two-page letter--which ultimately I read in full on the air, to demonstrate that I had felt in advance that the record would be a dirty malicious smear designed to serve the W.C. lawyers (who feel increasingly cornered). But having got that off my mind, I erased Schiller completely--I cannot spare any time or thought for such vermin and as you say he is too transparent to need refutation--he hangs himself with every word he utters. I am only sorry that Penn and Harold Weisberg were bamboozled, and the others--and Epstein's sorry contribution to the record only increases my distaste for him.

Re: Ruby's death--I should like to see the story reprinted in the Seattle Times of 1/8/67, if it is no trouble to send it. I am embarrassed, however, that I did not read the clippings of your Dallas dispatches, as I had planned to do, on the plane to the west coast--what happened was that I had to make a 7:15 a.m. flight, the only one that would get me to Victoria to keep my engagement that evening at the University; and I was so fearful that I would oversleep and miss the flight that I had a relentless insomnia throughout the night. As a result, I could not keep my eyes open during the flight nor do any of the work I had hoped to accomplish in the relative peace and quiet of the airplane.

The visit to Victoria was brief but I did a TV interview and 2 hours on radio before my speech at night. The next day I proceeded to Los Angeles, to discover that not only Penn Jones and his wife but also the editor of the Minority of One had also arrived that very day. There was constant activity--Penn and I were on the Mort Sahl radio program Friday night, and then the three of us taped the Sahl TV show (2 hours) on the Sunday. I also taped a one-hour interview for Pacifica radio. I was worn out but cheerful, the lack of sleep and rest being nullified by the pleasure of being among my fellow-researchers and friends, some of whom I met personally for the first time after prolonged acquaintance by mail or phone. But, while I did the radio and TV stunts without resisting too hard, I did prove to myself again that I do not at all like being a public figure and engaging in these appearances--they are a necessity, no doubt, but for me something of a penalty for my commitment to this case. I much prefer the research and analysis, but I admit that the results are sterile if not shared with the public.

In any case, I have been too busy even to read the Manchester stuff in LOOK, if you can imagine that! I was away the best part of a week, so work was piled up both at the office and at home, lots and lots of mail, etc. About my manuscript: unfortunately I made only three copies (i.e., the original plus 2 carbons) because I had to do all the typing myself and I hate using carbons. Now the contract requires me to supply two copies to the publisher, so I have only the third copy to work with myself, which means that I have to lug it back and forth between my apartment and the office so as to be able to discuss any question my editor may have whether he calls at home or at my place of work. As it is about 650 pages, even the carbon copy is heavy! And unfortunately, as you will have gathered, there is no pre-publication copy to spare. I will of course ask the publisher to send you a review copy--perhaps when page proofs are ready.

Yes, I have seen Ramparts--in fact, I even wrote the editor in praise of the article "The Case for Three Assassins" because I thought it was a very good piece of work, and despite my disgust at the "spoof" (I am told LeBocuf is meant to be Harold Weisberg) and despite the fact that I am on distant and cool terms with both the co-authors, for reasons too lengthy to explain but which I can assure you are valid, entirely valid.

Penn does not write and now I find that he does not talk very fully either. For example, we were together in Los Angeles for three days and he never mentioned that an unknown (to me) researcher is living with the Jones at Midlothian. I learned about that only when I returned to New York yesterday and received a phonecall from Harold Weisberg. Penn rather outdid himself with new sensational material (most of which I discount), mainly on homosexuality among many of the principals in this case. If what he says is valid, it is a wonder how he manages to make it sound like the most dubious and irresponsible nonsense. Yet he is honest fundamentally--brave, sincere, and endearing. I find it hard to talk with his wife and conversation with Penn himself is not always easy. I think sometimes that they don't feel at home really with the researchers who are city types and perhaps even "intellectuals."

I hope you will consider the offer to write a book on the USA that the French publisher invited. The subject is by no means exhausted. Americans have such grandiose illusions about themselves--they little know how vulgar, evil, and repugnant America can seem, not to Europeans alone but even to its own people. A good case in point is to make a trip, as I just did, using both American and non-American airlines--there is a microcosmic case study of manners and morals, in itself.

Weisberg is on radio in just a few minutes--I had better conclude this letter and set up the tape-recorder. Philippe, I do appreciate your letters and I hope you will excuse me if my replies are not always as clear or full as they should be--the constant rush-rush is beginning to get me down. By the way--I should mention that Leo Sauvage leaves tomorrow for three weeks holiday in Paris. Are you acquainted with him at all? Perhaps you will run into each other during his visit. He is one of my closest friends among the critics, a man of reserve, dignity, and absolute scruples, so far as my experience is concerned. He will write the introduction to my book.

Warm regards,