

9/20/66

Dear Ray,

Thanks for the very interesting information about Mort Sahl. He tried to discuss the assassination on his NYC TV show, which fizzled out after two or three weeks (he did have Judge Joe Brown, but that was pure self-promotion by Brown, not intelligent discussion). I adored Sahl when he turned up here some 8 or 10 years ago; I am glad he has found his metier there, since it failed to work out here.

I'm truly sorry to hear that Lillian's husband relapsed. I guess that is why she never replied to a letter I sent her 2 or 3 weeks ago, expressing my concern and relief to know he had come home.

Lane is certainly having great success. I have come some distance in your direction with respect to Epstein (who is progressively disenchanting); I suspect that some day, you will come a little way in my direction re: Mark Lane, who constantly provides new evidence of his charlatanism and disregard for the facts. He made a public appearance in a theater here last night; my "spy" gave me a full report on his performance; and from what I have heard of his misrepresentation and slanting with my own ears, on his various radio/TV appearances, I am convinced that he is a menace, for sheer irresponsibility if nothing worse.

Ray, if I had it to do over I would never have encouraged you to send your material to Silvers. When I did, I was in a taxi, en route home after meeting him for the first time over lunch. He made an excellent impression on me, then and subsequently, and I had full confidence in him. At his request, I put in two days of hard work for Popkin to use in his reply to a critical letter from Curtis Crawford (to appear, with Popkin's reply, in the next issue, I think). Later I saw a draft of Popkin's reply; I was surprised that he had used so little of the ammunition I had prepared for him with considerable effort and sacrifice of time; but said nothing to Silvers (Popkin was, and is still, abroad); after all, it was his letter, not mine. But when I picked up a copy of his paperback the other night, I realized what had happened--He had incorporated most of the unused arguments in his "book" which is merely a slightly padded version of his original article; he had drawn heavily too on Fonzi's article from The Greater Philadelphia Magazine (I am getting a copy or copies to send Maggie for all of you); and I suspect he also lifted some parts of your 399 study--I am not sure, as I have not had the time to do a comparison. I am deeply disappointed in Silvers' and Popkin's standard of ethics--they never asked if they could use my stuff, prepared for another purpose; and if they used yours, they obviously didn't ask permission nor, needless to say, give credit.

And that is by no means the worst of my experience with the publishing world--commercial, that is--in the last few months. Esquire has given me far more trouble than they can be worth AND never yet came through with payment, which I just learned was way below their usual scale (as I had suspected). I seem to be a born "exploitee" and never learned to protect my rights adequately in commercial dealings, since I have always worked in non-profit organizations. The situation is this: Toni McKeitrow had to call everyone mentioned in Ed Epstein's article, at the insistence of Esquire's lawyers. They are so stupidly bureaucratic that even though she knew that I had read and corrected Ed's references to me in his article, and even though she had spent a few hours at my place reading citations with her own two eyes (also at the insistence of their lawyers), she also called me to check Ed's references to me. His article, a kind of "primer" on the researchers and their theories if any, will be in the December issue. Also in that same issue, under my name, will be a miscellany titled "Notes for a New Investigation." That is my understanding of the plans. I am resigned to the inevitability of unpleasant surprises and changes; apparently these magazine-types will stoop to the very dirtiest tactics, whether Esquire or Ramparts. When you deal with non-commercial non-advertising periodicals like TMO, it is of course a different story, and no such problems have ever arisen. Material is treated with respect and appreciation. It is MUCH better than money could ever be.

Reverting to Silvers: let me suggest that you have him return your 399 opus; if he has not yet plagiarized it, he is likely to do so on the next round. I feel strongly that it should see daylight: have you tried any paperback houses? Please do, Ray--what about the publisher that put out Sylvan Fox's book?

I hear that the Ramparts issue on the peripherals will be December, not November; Jones Harris told me Dave Welsh would be in NYC this week, to see Harris among other reasons. Yes, I "remember" him all right; and do NOT expect to hear from him during his visit.

I am really sorry that I involved you, and myself, with Silvers/Popkin; my intentions were good.

Best, as ever,