

18 January 1968

Ray, Ray,

My note of January 10th was not meant to be snide and even less was it vicious. You have really misunderstood it entirely--perhaps it is my fault. I knew that whoever the unnamed critic was who thinks I am a CIA agent, it was NOT Ray Marcus. Had I thought otherwise, I would not have sent you what was intended to be a teasing and very affectionate note--"teasing," because it seemed to me that your suspicion of Thompson was exaggerated and that, whatever his failings, he was no more a CIA agent than I am. I even said that I was pulling your leg. How could you fail to realize that I was being a little facetious, not "snide" nor "vicious"? I do not say lightly or mechanically "all my love to you and Letha." I meant that, "serious differences of opinion" notwithstanding.

Perhaps I should not have been facetious about matters of such grave character; but that is my only "sin" toward you, Ray. Because I do value your friendship and Letha's, and because I think that you know that I am honest in my friendships, I hope that you will erase your mistaken impression of my note.

Ordinarily, I might have been very angered by your letter of the 12th and your complete misunderstanding of my note and of me as a person. But I read the letter just as I returned from the funeral services for my father, who died on Monday the 15th, when grief and mourning placed things in perhaps a better perspective, or at least a different one. You could not know the circumstances in which I would receive your letter; and I do not tell you what they were in order to make you feel "guilty" or unkind. I mention my situation only because it has underlined the need to value and to understand those who are close to us, whether friends or family, and to keep a sense of balance about our relationships. I realize how many times I was too quick to take offense, how many times I took myself too seriously, how many times I lacked a sense of humor, and failed to give trust where it was deserved and earned. So I could not be angry at your "ultimatum," Ray, although it did hurt and sadden me. I hope that you will reconsider it.

Sincerely,