

29 August 1967

Dear Bill,

Don't worry, your "paragraph 2" will be strictly between you and me, and let me say at once that I LOVED it and it gave me comfort. Aside from you and Arnoni (and Sauvage, when he is in town and not too rushed to talk), I have to choke down my feelings about our colleagues and the Jolly Green. Sometimes I don't make it—and the results are dismaying. Your delicious take-off on the "truth business" and the beating it is taking in sundry cities and towns comforted and delighted me, made me feel less isolated...for which I truly thank you.

Last week was particularly bad: First I had a three-hour visit from Harold Weisberg and we exchanged some pretty hard words, not only on Garrison but on his general catalogue of injuries and persecutions, and his grandiose tributes to his own work. Since I took my courage in my hands even to broach such subjects with him out of nothing but genuine friendship and concern for the damage he is doing himself with his excesses, his unyielding—even unhearing—attitude was unnerving. That night, when I had only just managed to stop my hands' shaking, there was Harold again—this time on the radio. I wish I had time for a full account but since I am more short of time than usual suffice it to say that he was so aggressive and incessant that the host had to go off the air for almost a full minute, to cool things down; and at one point, H. thanked one of the other guests for a lavish compliment—a minute too soon, since it turned out to be directed to his adversary. Hands resumed shaking.

Two days later, I received a blast from Mark Lane in the mail. I had heard from Maggie after her weekend with Lane (about which I have NOT been told anything else) that his reaction to my book was highly positive; and, indeed, he did send a very generous quote to be used on the jacket—but sent it only after ignoring the deadline and a written reminder, and having to read it over the phone at the 11th hour when my editor (over my violent protests) phoned him. Then, only then, did he send me a "copy" of his July 27th letter (which looks like the original in every respect and which I suspect he never mailed, and now pretends was lost in the mail). In this letter, after giving the generous quote for the jacket, he proceeded to tax me with failure to mention The National Guardian (i.e., Lane the Leader) in the appendix, which deals with the news media and the WR, while the contributions of the National Guardian which Lane enumerated all preceded the WR). I haven't a spare copy of my reply to send you; suffice it to say that I assured him that if he had let me know at any time after his receipt of the galleys, I would have been glad to add a reference to the National Guardian; that I saw no ground in any of my published work or my personal conversations with him to explain his accusation that I had deliberately omitted the Guardian because of its "persuasion"; and (the blockbuster) that while his tirade was undoubtedly the manifestation of his loyalty to the Guardian, I had to point out that not only was there no mention whatever of the Guardian in Rush to Judgment but that mention was studiously and deliberately avoided, while my own omission was nothing more than oversight. I ended by saying that I was not obliged to be holier than the Pops and expected him to reconsider and retract his accusations. And I sent this by registered mail, so that he cannot use the "lost in the mails" alibi again.

Next came a visit from Ray and Letha to NYC for the weekend, primarily for their children's sake and sightseeing. They invited me to dinner, which was supposed to be at about 9 p.m. but because of a mixup at the bus terminal, where their son was to arrive, they picked me up at 11:30 p.m. Yesterday I tried to return their hospitality by inviting all of them to lunch at the Delegate's Dining Room. Four instead of 5 turned up, Ray sans jacket so the maitre had to find one for him, and mortified me by eating lettuce and consomme, that kind of nibbling, while the management gave me the jaundiced eye—they expect a substantial check for a table for six at the height of the noon luncheon and with space at a premium.

Bill, I am delighted to hear that your brace is off and that you are swimming and doing TWO films! At the time of the surgery, who would have expected such remarkable and rapid results! I do rejoice at this very good news, in an otherwise barren and dreary period. Dreary, because of the relationships with our colleagues, which you are experiencing no less than I. It makes me realize how much we gave each other in the pre-Garrison era, and how important and precious were the individual and group relationships. But, to my sorrow, I have to realize also that they were in part illusory, based on false assumptions about the coincidence of our objectives and the commonality of our ethics. I was perhaps closest with Vince and Maggie; we can barely manage to drag ourselves through a strained conversation these days. So I understand your discouragement, and cannot blame you for being ready to call it quits.

I'm very glad you liked the Wesleyan ode or sonnet or whatever it is. Please keep it for your private amusement. Ray pressed me to let him have it published but I don't want to mix the serious work in Accessories with a trifle like this lampoon--it would provide too much grist for the Shilewis types.

I've saved the worst for last. Bill, you know how loathe I am ever to say "no" to you. But I just don't see when I can make time to re-do the tape on the CBS outrage. I am acting head of my office, pro tem; covering two different meetings, and have brought home the documents to work on tonight; but on arriving, found an envelope of galleys, to work on urgently, for Thompson's book (I am helping by checking all his citations, indexing the book, etc.). I don't know what to do first--guess I'll have dinner, and then decide. But I didn't want to delay this reply to you, Bill, since it is really the most difficult of the waiting chores. Is there any possibility of your getting off the tape what I said, and saying it for me, with the explanation that there was a technical snafu? I'd say that I would try at a later date, but it would mislead you--our heavy season at the office started yesterday, and from here on until Christmas, it will get progressively busier, not less hectic, and honestly I see no chance at all to repeat the tape, even at home. I wouldn't mind at all, though, if you yourself provide the voice for my words, or get some female voice--Is that at all possible???

I can't understand how WBAI could have gummed it up as they did--they kept us waiting time and again while they checked levels, tested voices, adjusted the mikes and the tables, etc. I would have thought they were making a monumental effort to get it all perfect. I didn't get the names of the engineer(s) but they surely did seem to be regular personnel there. I am sorrier than I can say, for the gum-up and for my impossible circumstances now, which prevent a second try. I can only hope that you understand and will not feel that I have let you down--something I want never to do.

All my love,