

Mail interception

11/30/70

When Bud phoned me this pm to tell me of the arrival of something I'd been expecting, I inquired about his trip to Houston, having just gotten an envelope from him mailed there. He didn't know what I was talking about, not having been out of Washington for two weeks and then not having been in Houston (and the contents much more current than that anyway, both prepared after his last trip).

The main envelope bore his DC return address but neither stamps nor a DC postmark. It has two Houston cancellations, both pale. Between them Nov and an 8 and an M can be discerned. There are four stamped "Air Mail Special Delivery" stamps on the face. There is a postage meter stamp for 95¢, the meter No. PR 595536. The envelope was unglued lengthwise and almost entirely unglued at the flap, to which a short piece of Magic tape had been added. Although the end of the envelope away from the flap is not stuck as fast as one expects on manufacture, it is stuck much better than the rest of the envelope.

My postoffice stamped this envelope on receipt, its practice (and I presume the standard one) with special-delivery envelopes. It is marked as having been received at 6:15 a.m. today by the special-delivery section. I picked it up at about 8:30 a.m.

One of the strange things is that there is no sign of either stamps having been present and removed or of Bud's postage meter.

But thinks he mailed this Friday. Thursday was Thanksgiving.

What I mailed him Friday had not reached him by about 3 p.m. today.

Now there is no airport here, no air mail from Washington here, as Bud knows. He also knows there is no special delivery out in the country. Washington is only 50 miles away.

By a coincidence that seems less than remarkable, what was supposed to have been mailed to me from NY Wednesday has not yet reached me, and recently five letters, all mailed on different days, reached my publisher in a single mail delivery.

There will be a formal complaint to the chief inspector of the Post Office Dept., who Bud knows, but because we discussed this on our phones, there is what would seem to be a reasonable presumption somebody will not be surprised.

Why Houston is a mystery. There is a thing about Houston. When my baggage was intercepted in May 1968, when I left Minneapolis for Kansas City en route to New Orleans, on a plane that didn't go to Houston and whose next and terminal stop was at Dallas, my baggage was found at the Houston terminal, and in the possession of a different air line. At least, that is what Braniff told me. and this seems like a peculiar take for them to have invented.

Most ridiculous of all, the contents of the mailing are public papers, filed in court! Somebody got very little.

I hope it will be possible to trace the meter, but if it is at a post office, which also uses them, it will mean nothing.