

4/1/71

Dear Mary,

I'm sorry to report that I haven't sent the books, but simply because I haven't gotten them yet. I know it seems incredible, the boom has been in some stores for about a month (and other stores don't have them), under the contract I was to have gotten some promptly, and in addition I spelled out that I'd have a lot of letter-writing to do (and I've complaint of the fact of already having this needless letter-writing and had to do it), and as of today I don't even have a book to take as a press copy with me when I go to Washington in the a.m. After a big argument, they finally sent me a single box of books two weeks ago, and the only reason I got that, I suppose, is because I was able to get their very nice secretary to do that. She shipped them as I requested, by Greyhound, I drove to the bus station, and I got them. What this had meant is that I had to makethree trips to NBC, which had asked for copies two months ago, didn't have them at the right time, and the man with the important interest got snowed under with his daily work and as of a week ago had read only 60 pages. I haven't been able to take a copy to CBS or ABC, and despite the curse on us and on me with all the media, I have a friend at the first and a request from ABC NY to background the evening-news producer in Washington at ABC. If all of this can lead to nothing, it is also what we have to do with this subject to hope to get any interest and attention.

So, my apologies, and as soon as they arrive, I'll send them. I've been billed for them, naturally, but I haven't gotten my overdue advance nor the refund of authorized expenses. When I tell you these are nice guys, you get a general idea of what publishers are unless, like Mark, you fall into an Arthur Cohen who sees good commerical possibilities, know how to exploit them and then does it. To date, there has been no attention to the book that my friends or I haven't been responsible for, there has been no single ad anywhere of which I know, and my requests for an outline of their ad and promo campaign are unanswered. If I keep quiet I am a schnook, and if I say anything or ask anything I am some kind of radical trouble-maker, and thus my reputation, combined with the original curse of inventing the underground book, through the publishing industry.

One of the sorrier examples of thoroughly professional incompetence had to do with two TV shows in NYC. On the first, with one of the publishers present before the show began but not staying there for it (Cohen himself, with a big outfit, was there for the taping of Minority Report and knew and performed all the dirty, behind-the-back tricks that, unfortunately, make for successful publishing--his was executive vice president of Holt then). Foreman ran out. He and I learned this together, before the taping began and in plenty of time for the a.m. papers and the wire services. I asked him to do something when he didn't do it on his own. And he refused, saying he'd leave that to the station. The station was then terrified of even the mention of Foreman's name, for he had threatened them with a spurious (unspoken) libel suit and they were worried about the cost of defending it, not about losing it. That was a good news story when it happened, and it is the kind of thing that can make a book, like the crazy Army bit with Green Berets... They I learned that they were going to have a real whitewash, through fear, and under the direction of their lawyers. Will my publishers do anything? No. Will they hold the still-unheld stereotype of a press conference with a newsy book? No. I have to fight with them and the station at the same time, telling them that they'd better arrange one for the Monday after the Saturday airing of they'll have trouble and I'll do one without them, and giving the station its own set of problems about what I'll do to them if they don't give me equal time. Finally, the station gets worried enough (and knows me well enough to know what I am capable of, having seen it), and they come accross with the promise of equal time. Have I a publisher there to see to it that things go right, or to keep in touch with the station to see that I'm not gutted in the editing? No, there are other things to do, like, I suppose, having supper on time. So, the format isn't kept, there I am on camera, with a promised, uninterrupted 15 minutes for reponse to 30 minutes of lines, and the first minute isn't over before there is interruption and a ganup, a fillibuster. If I sit back and take it, I look like a bum and like a man who has written dishonestly, if I don't I'm fighting, which is

what I had to do to keep from not being heard at all on my own time. When I've sat in the sponsor's booth, where there is a clock and a monitor, and see segments that can't run over 13 minutes when aired running over 20, I know they are doing this so they can edit. There is no other reason. And editing takes time and costs money. Ordinarily, it is stop-watched and precisely done. And then I know that Gerold Frank is there, with or without his publisher, and I know he has three years in this and aside from expenses, which in three years really mount, and I know what he has been up to for those three years, so I have an idea of the costs, and atop all this Doubleday gave him an advance of not less than \$100,000, do I have to be told what to expect behind my back as well as to my face? And nobody to be doing the ordinary publishers' work, to keep things straight. This is what goes on that nobody knows when I appear and have a fight. When I don't have to, I can be as cool and effective as anyone would want. But those who wonder about my fighting, and sometimes angrily, do not know what lies behind it. These whores are so dirty that they didn't use any film clips to promote the first show, and did less than their usual on that, but on the second, they use, of two hours of taping, Huie calling me a nut! Do I have a publisher? And do I have to tell you more of the media and their attitude toward us?

I've heard enough of the show as aired to have an idea of the great stuff that I did get in that got edited out. The Department of Disinformation did about as well as it could under the circumstances. On the first show, this meant a lot of work, like juxtaposing questions and answers. On the second, it meant mostly scissoring.

Anyway, this is why I haven't sent the books, and when you hear more stories about how easily I blow my stack and what kind of wild-man I am, perhaps you have a glimmer of what lies behind it. I never fight unless I have to. I was able to avoid fighting with you, for example, and if you caught the shows I did in Dallas, they were real cool and, I think, effective. I prefer not fighting, which ties me up for days, and I prefer dealing with fact, not personalities. I have yet to get a complaint from any of us on any one of the many shows I did without fighting or having to, so I think they haven't been too bad. The fact is that I have done shows with those who haven't aired any of us without at least giggling and being snide and indecent, and had them praise me highly after a cool, quiet show. So if you begin to get accounts of the scene I made in NY, you should have been there to judge. Fact is that I waited too long to scrap. I should have done it forcefully the moment I was interrupted, but I was thinking of too many sensibilities, not my own interest. I don't think anybody will confront me on this again. Not even Huie, who is past the point of no return (emotionally) on this subject.

I didn't mean to unload like this when I began. But I suppose it is because it is on my mind, because I had the time before waking Lil, and because others are entitled to know and perhaps agree that sometimes my alternatives are limited and dominate what I feel I may and may not do, must or must not do. But the real purpose in beginning this letter is to assure you that as soon as I get the books I'll send them, special handling. It surely will need all the promotion it will get, for it is getting none from the publisher and it can fairly be said that most of what it has gotten it has gotten in spite of them.

Hope Buck is getting along well and that you are all in good shape. Best from both,