

10/26/70

Dear Mary,

Because we've been worried, we're especially glad to get your letter of the 22nd. I went to D.C. today and when my mind was free, it was on my mind.

About the Nat. Enq. articles I don't know and, having been paid, really don't care. It is already dated and I think that for the most part, at this juncture, there is almost no good publicity, that is, regardless of how good the story, this is not a time when we can expect much good to come from it. We have much more hard work to do before that time comes. However, if I hear, I'll let you know.

It would seem that there is now nothing you can do but stew about Jimmy Lee. This cannot help you and it cannot help him. So, try not to. I was originally happy that he was going into the service, but I am not certain it would be the best thing for him. If discipline is what he needs, having to do things he doesn't want to, having to do things when they are supposed to be done, then maybe it is best. However, whether or not it is, any further decisions on it are out of your control. If, as you put it, they get his health straightened out, then two prospects are both, seemingly, very worth while. So, instead of stewing, nope., Buck has undoubtedly told you that if Jimmy Lee will eat what they serve, he'll have no problem putting weight on.

Other things are on my mind, too, so I may be putting this badly. One of the things I fear is that your apprehensions will be communicated to the boy, which would not be good for him because it would place him under an added burden, and he carries more than a full share. (Sorry about the worse than the usually bad typing. This old machine is beyond repair. As soon as I can get to it, I'm making a desk on which I can use my portable. Then my typing will be no worse than terrible, not the incredible when everything about this old job sticks.)

Another is that you and Buck are, perhaps without realizing or acknowledging it, to yourselves or each other, blaming yourselves. Nonsense! The problem is one of society, not parents. How the hell can the kids look at the world we gave them without puking, without the deepest doubts, without seeking some way of escape? It is our collective fault, not that of individual parents. Of course, sometimes the parents could have prevented things they didn't, but in most cases it is the disaffection of those who should be disaffected. There'd be something wrong with the kids if they accepted the modern US. Some, intent upon Mommon worship, take anything and expect the rewards. A minority seeks to cope with what they cannot, but does try. A large percentage seeks only to escape. Could you prevent this? Can anyone reach inside the mind of another? Perhaps if you had the most perfect communication with your boy, you might have made him see what he appears not to, but could you tell him wrong is right? In the end he may be a better person for this experience, once it is over. Who can tell? But the one thing that cannot help him is a guilt feeling by his parents, so don't feel that way, if, as I suspect, you do. I hope that I'm wrong, but I'll have to be convinced. You didn't do it. I don't think you could have prevented it, either. I don't think it would hurt either of you to reread Ecclesiastes.

Mary, he is your boy and you cannot help worrying, but please do not heap ashes on your heads and do not seek an unearned guilt. It will do no good and might hurt.... I hope the time comes when you can tell me more. Until then, let us hope it does straighten out and the possibilities become the realities.

And get Buck away from the phone. Make him bowl, or fuss at you, or go hunting, if you can down there now. But for the kid's sake, don't let him brood.

Bud: I went there today because Saturday was supposed to have been the last day for the government to respond to my clothing/pix suit. They didn't bother telling me in advance that they were wrong by a week, so I wasted the time and money, except for what I learned, which is a little that tends to confirm the analysis I've already given you and Gary. He has now been able to twist what he believes to the point where it is that the little work Jim does on the suits is a burden and that he never agreed to handle them to begin with. He tells others this, but not me, and he has not answered any of the letters. I do not press him on that or them, for to do so would not serve a constructive purpose. Flammonde also has been silent. No answer to my rather blunt charges. It would be self-deception to expect this to straighten out spontaneously and unwarranted to hope that I can bring it about by any effort I might make. It gets more like Garrison every day, and they waste an enormous amount of time, on crap and on duplication. If they haven't sent you the list of the committee's files, see if you can get one. If you go over it closely, it should be informative....I'm glad Arch thinks well of what Smith is doing. I make no effort to learn. I'm all for any exploration of the Archives. But my own feeling is that Ron has much to learn and has to come closer to home plate. He's far out in the field. As time goes on, this may happen, as he learns fact and how to discriminate. He seems like a nice guy and I have no doubt of his sincerity.

Paul: I don't think the question was of changing his mind but Alvarez'. I hope your info is correct, I suspect I could guess the source, and I sure have tried for that to happen. By the way, no response from the magazine. What a helluva way to have to spend time!

I've heard little from Sylvia, nothing in response to my letter about Lifton, which I sent you.

When you can, please send that Ferris stuff. Jim hasn't finished that yet and I may just have to do it myself, aside from what he's already done. I also hope to prepare another motion soon and will send it around. Gary should soon be sending you a few things...The Nichols suit presents problems I think nobody else has seen. I hope I can say but nobody! I've read his response and the government's (rather helpful) answer. If they knew what I know, we'd be in real trouble. I am grateful for their ignorance.

If you were looking out that window now, you'd be seeing what on a bright, sunny evening would be the most glorious colors. It is just before dark and it has been a dreary day. But it will brighten again before all the beauty is gone. Whenever you can get here, we'll be looking forward to it.

And please try and play it cool with Jimmy Lee, both of you. You'll not be able to help him otherwise and you must be tearing yourselves apart.

-at us nope,

When is your article going to appear in National Enquirer?

October 22, 1970

Dearest Lil and Harold:

Well, we were just about to relax about Jimmy Lee (he was finally released from the hospital -- and it was not meningitis) when they called us and he is back in the hospital. The doctors told us that it is not as serious as it was before but they hospitalized him immediately this time when the trouble started again. We have not heard another word since that call. Buck is spending all day, every day, doing nothing but sitting by the telephone. Buck thinks they are going to release him completely from the Army, but I don't know... Of course, I would be glad to see him out of that danger, but we don't know how it would affect the trouble he was in last summer. If they can ever get his health straightened out, he stands a very good chance of going to language school (Chinese) or of becoming a clerk in the Adjutant General's office. We are afraid that the problem in February (drugs) caused his resistance to be very low. He is over six feet tall and, on February 6th, he weighed over 200 pounds. He was "the picture of health" until that time. On September 17th, when he left for the army, he was white, thin, nervous and easily nauseated.

Harold, I am completely appalled by all that is going on between you and Bud. It is almost unbelievable! I had the impression that Bud was so very fond of you and thought so highly of your work. It is very sad that you are now being treated in such a shabby manner. Maybe it will all straighten out. I certainly hope so.

I had word from another source that Paul's melon theory will not be printed at all. Perhaps all the criticism has changed his mind. I really don't know what happened.

I haven't heard anything from Sylvia. I guess the cholera epidemic in Turkey has her on the run. What are you hearing from her?

Arch told me that Bob Smith is doing some excellent work in the Archives. Arch thinks Bob is quite an asset to the cause.

Oh, what I wouldn't give to be looking out your big picture window at the birds and lovely view right now! I can't think of a more relaxing place in all the world. At the moment, we don't know when we'll be able to make it up there. But, I'll let you know the minute we know anything definite.

With warmest regards and much love to you both,

Mary