

Dear Jim,

King book

2/6/76

There isn't time for me to get into anything except reading before supper and packaging and I didn't want to run your toll charges up when we spoke a few minutes ago, so I'm writing, which will give you a reminder after the immediate needs are taken care of.

And an explanation.

My longest-standing friend on the Enquirer has retired to devote himself to free-lancing now that he should retire. However, I have other friends of varying degrees there. Even strangers call me from there, for checking, advice, direction, etc.

Today the one with whom I'm best friends called me about a phoney CIA story. I ~~xx~~ turned him on to two others he went for and he'll float them up to policy level.

In the course of it I raised in confidence the possibility of selling the ancillary rights to the King book in the event this arrangements that are tentative do not come to anything. You can read into the letter I have mailed you my reaction to what I take to be a shift by Dick, whether or not he recognizes it.

^(Enc.)
He got real excited and wanted to float this one to. I told him I have my word, not a contract, with Dick and Newsweek, that he could do what he thought best after reflection, but I'd prefer that he take a little time, use the other stories as a means of getting here and see what ^{day} have in hand now before he makes an approach. I told him that while I can and do trust him - and gave him enough verbally to tell him what I have - I have to check with the others first and I would not consider any use until the draft of the book is completed.

He asked me how much I got for the PM use. I told him \$1800. Would I take that? No. \$2,000? No, \$3,000. No. If a book deal goes through it is not my decision but I would even then not agree to less than \$5,000 for one story. If there is no book deal and I have to do an underground version I'd sell whatever use they'd like to make - more than one page-oner, for the cost of manufacturing the book.

How long would it take? My response was my limitations, that when I have no help and I can't sit indefinitely I can't produce as rapidly with longer nights now. But if I have a deal that enables me to hire help I can produce much faster. In any event, no use until the draft is completed and with a deal it can be completed much faster. He is excited and he knows them better than I do. He is also an excellent reporter, by the way, and they hire the best only, regardless of what the paper carries.

Now, what I'm reporting is a baskstop on which I think the prospects are not bad.

I have no problems with a go-for-broke.

~~xxxx~~ If I can arrange for help to speed this up and get it out as an underground book and if there is no fast certainty of a commercial appearance, which I'd prefer, I'm now started. Maybe.

While there were a few other calls, like one from the doctor's nurse telling me my anti-coagulant level is good and my metabolism, as measured, normal, so I don't ~~need~~ need thyroid supplementation, a large ^{caption} ~~part~~ large-part of today was spent going over the ~~part~~ ^{part} only to McKinley's second JFK piece. They are actually sending me the next 18 pages by special messenger. I've by now and by normal standards more than earned the fee. But how they waste money if they are spending this much to get copy to me! After the makeup is done, caption frozen in space and needing correction and the first six pages set. However, this will provide half the cost of reprinting WW of FW. Much as I regret the time it takes.

Today you said nothing about Joan Harris and I forgot to ask. I have to hold them off on anything new and a 30-minute NYC only special is worth little in the overall. I asked her to let it wait until I've completed a draft. Days like today do not speed it.

Best,