

21 Aug 71

On Hal: Had him to dinner about three weeks ago. He seemed to be more relaxed about his job and more confident and much more his old self, but there was a subtle difference neither of us can quite define in his attitude on what we're all interested in: he was not so much turned off as not as much turned on. I'm sorry if that isn't clear, but it isn't clear to me either; since neither of us can put our finger on it, it may be that we were looking for something that actually wasn't there.

When Hal comes here he usually brings his files for us to see and looks through ours, and we all get caught up. A long time ago I went through our folder of correspondence with you, made a list of the letters in which his troubles were mentioned and marked them so I could remove them. After he left, when I was replacing these I found that I had unfortunately missed one, which I had neither listed nor marked. Yours, one sheet, headed "Later 10/19." This refers to an earlier letter of yours, 10/1/70, which I had removed.

When you have the time would you please look up your copy of 10/19 and tell us if you think there's anything in it that might bother him?

Hal will not mention having seen this. I shall make the opportunity to do so myself, without saying anything about this particular page. I'll tell him that our correspondence with you basically got started because you were concerned about him, not having heard from him for some time; that the few letters about him concerned his personal affairs, had no place in this file, and have been destroyed (which they will be by that time, to make this true). (As a matter of fact at the moment I don't even remember too clearly what was in them, and shall not re-read them so that I will not remember.)

Knowing him better than we do, do you think this will pass? Any suggestions? If his feelings might have been hurt in any way by having seen that one page - although actually I don't know if he did, but on the chance that he did - I want to do something about it. Whether or not he was bothered by it, he would certainly wonder where the rest of the letter was, to which this page was "Later."

I'm mortified by this slip. I make all sorts of really unbelievable mistakes, but usually not this kind.

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