

5/7/71

Dear Dick (ER, GRS, PH, HV, JW), 4 F

I should have written you yesterday morning before I went to the P.O. to pick up copy on an interview the National Enquirer converted into a byline story (had to correct it by phone to make the deadline), but there were other things I felt I had to address first.

In NY, where the publisher managed a perfect record, not arranging for a single one of the five shows I'd lined up when I was in New York before, all the publisher had to do was phone and arrange scheduling, I improvised an interview with CBC radio. They taped more than a half hour, perhaps closer to an hour (estimate by changing reels). It came about through a press conference the arrangements for which were handled by Jerry and Carol Jackson (who did a great job on the phone), for an award by the Media Workshop, black professionals, writers and artists. Had it not been for other news breaks (like trashing in DC, arrests by the thousands, etc) there would have been more coverage. There was good black coverage (p.1 col. 1, above fold, conservative Amsterdam News, Ebony, Jet, Essence there, Sepia coming here). Anyway, Ellie Fisher, who is a friend of Friends as she was of King, spoke to me, we got along well, and as soon as I finished everything else up (Jerry having snatched from the publisher's void a taping of one of the TV shows I'd arranged), I went to their studios. After I got to talking to her, I got concerned about the college, so I asked her to restrict herself to what I said of you in the book, figuring that was safe, she agreed, and she is to have added that to the other things we discussed. I know nothing of the airing, etc. I am to get a tape for special pixie purposes that will ultimately unveil themselves.

There was some other foreign attendance, as the London Telegraph (London Times will do story from DC) and the Chateaubriand papers of Brazil (whose correspondent wanted to throw a party for me tonight, but I have a chambers conference in Baltimore today with the judge and fed. atty in my long-delayed helicopter suit-need I say with no time for prepping? She'll do that next time I'm in NY, and I suspect this will involve other reporters. There was no single unfriendly question in a two-hour conference, which is an exceptional sign of the attitude of the working press, as distinguished from their bosses. Other friends also were great. One at Bantam arranged a small dinner party (lasting to 4:30 a.m.) with a few members of the Harlem writer's guild. Flo Kennedy arranged the award, etc., and one of her women's lib girls did the art work, Jerry did the messenger service (and so much else I can't begin to tell it all-he gets better with each experience and is now excellent at p.r., his instinct for it being good and his maturity growing astoundingly with each experience).

I've been busy writing letters, and some will work. An extremist of the right who has been nagging me has begun to change. It is he alone who sent me an advance of the NYTimes Kaplan axing, so the 1st thing I did before leaving was write the Times' Sunday Book Editor whose name I then didn't know a rather strong response, beginning with Kaplan's antecedents. Jerry followed this with a spontaneous call to him yesterday and found him honestly disturbed and going to do something by way of rectification, which is exceptional. He had just read my letter and apparently was somewhat shaken by Kaplan's complicating connections, beginning with law-clerking for Tom (pop of Ramsey) Clark when Ramsey had been AG in the period of the book; criminal-division DJ experience (and that is where the job on Ray was done); his Jack Ruby book-pro-Warren Commission orientation (as expressed in the American Scholar Spring 1967-hes never responded to one of my more vigorous letters on that, which is where I defended the other critics.) I'm so confused now I do know to whom I've sent what, but I went after Barkham and Gertz. Replies from both came in my absence, and I addressed both yesterday, to be mailed this a.m. Not until the weekend will I be able to try and sort out copies and send, some for remailing. But it was exhausting, coming as it did immediately upon the latest CTEA stupidity which is now frustrated-and Ray's attempted break could not have been more untimely. However, I've been able to convert some of that, not in the major media, as with some of the black journals in NY and today on the NBC-TV station in Baltimore, before the chambers conference (see pp. 122-3). I was able to call two of those who'd said they'd attend before leaving, from the station. I expect one to come here this weekend. He is going

to DC this weekend for one of the more unusual journalistic reasons (JWs take note), to celebrate his busting there last year on ~~May~~ May 9. I've invited him to stay here. Looks like it is maybe a busy hostelry this summer. I'm already engaged in separations. Had seven in bedrolls two weeks ago for the big demonstration. Black NYTimes reporter Harlem office to have covered but other more pressing assignments precluded. Ditto invitation. There is at least personal interest. Expect to hear more.

One impossible area in which I do expect breakthrough is with blacks, where there has been much work. I'd have seen Jesse Jackson had it not been for the urgency of blocking the CIA stupidity with Boggs. Someone has asked a copy of their memo, and when I can I'll send it with an okay for others, who should, for the most part, understand the inherent hazards without an accompanying memo, for which I'll not have time. I'll send, if I haven't, my Boggs letter.

Jerry, who is getting as good as Hal and Gary, took off the day of the press conference. We were in a NY studio 7:30 a.m., and on the Alex Bennett show to 9 (Gary, Chicago made a different man of him. He's not as he was in Minn. He got so radical that the station that still uses Fred Gale fired him. The protests were so great- thousand-body picket lines, that of all things, ABC local hired him for the a.m. show, three hours, and he is building again an activist youth audience. He wants me back alone, not sharing with peace demonstrations. My age was an asset, as when they had a phoned report on the 7,000 in the stadium jail in DC I could recall the Badajoz bull ring from the Spanish insurrection. It was a great show. Right from there to the press conference (scheduling like Hal's, of the past), and from there to TV taping, from there to meeting, to CBC, etc. Jerry may have snatched a Danish at the p. conf, but he had lunch at 8:00 that night. Suddenly he recalled a black station that had been supposed to be there, told me to phone them, they immediately taped and aired within 10 minutes. So, what this says, is that if the major media is not yet as turned on as we'd like, the minor are, and it requires only the arranging, which in no single instance to date the pub has arranged or not opposed. He was so damned cheap he didn't have a copy of the book there for any reporter, and I had to loan my single copy for the London and Canadian correspondents to read the appropriate parts. We did so much better when we had no publisher and no external inhibitions. He was to have copied my entire DJ file six months ago and despite constant reminders (as when a black Congressman would have used it to defend Boggs, of all things!), hadn't. He finally showed up with copies of a small appt, what I used in the suit only, so I had to stay away from that not to take the edge off future use. They've finally promised a single full set by mail (no single promise to date yet kept) for me to try and use in DC, which is not impossible.

The book is being reprinted, stupidly, despite my immediate complaint and suggestions for use of the blank spaces on the dust jacket, identically as it was. This does not mean all copies are sold. We do not know how many are in wholesalers' warehouses, but it is a slight good sign. Now we still have to sell them. If the book goes well, I've arranged probable reprinting in a year. I also found time for approaches on several other books while I was there. Time will tell. So, you can see it was hectic, understand that I'm pooped, even for my recent exhausted state, and why I'm so far behind in answering accumulated corres. Oh, yes, I also did an hour by midnight phone the midnight before the early a.m. show on ABC, to a clear-channel Texas station. And while in the ABC studios, I improvised a beeper interview on the Ray escape for net radio news. And I did more investigating, which included access to what only the FBI had seen previously, the "How-LIFE pictures taken at the moment King was killed. Have to rite them, too. But imagine the changes if LIFE, which refused Ray's lawyer, gave me alone access! With our history! AP never did provide the pix I bought mid-March, so I've asked the return of my check. I've duplicated them anyway.

To sum up, in this out major problems are the defendant and his counsel and there is no doubt of acquittal if he can get the case into court. What I have in the book is enough but doesn't begin to say what I now have in hand. Gotta get ready to go to Balt. Best to all, and all credit to Jerry, who is the Hal-Gary east-coast counterpart now. We now have to try and arrange phone shows to other areas, where there has been no exposure and where the syndication of the Barkhams can hurt. Best,