

Thornley, from Beatright correspondence.

8/1/63-In Whittier, Calif.

8/4/63-Ditto. "Bud Simeo, the Number-one man on the dedication page of The Idle Warriors, found certain parts of it very much to his taste, while not pretending to understand the whole. Especially proclaimed the "comic peevishness, a faintly mad searching of pockets" passage an excellent communication."

"...Interior Dialogs, a notebook I keep..."

On page two he says, "I am working as never before", including up to 10 hours sleep, and "I've averaged a page a day on a new version of The Idle Warriors ... Oh, yes, I started The Idle Warriors on April Fools Day--so it's almost 1/3 finished by now." Hardly a rapid pace, particularly for revision.

"Shortly after you left the Quarter, I Reckon back, I beat the hell-fire-shit out of Millie one fine morning when she got bitchy. A number of things followed: (1) after two days of semi-repentant uncertainty, I was overwhelmed by a sense of total relief (sic); (2) I spent the next few weeks reading Alan Watts, laying around various bars, drinking, trying to make Vic's newest girl friend, Joen, extending friendly hands to Mim, Loy, and Lane; trying to make Judy (Moe's daughter; I don't think you know her); having a casual affair with a little girl from North Carolina; dating Jessica; and drifting from one party to another with a seldom-opened notebook in my hand. In the midst of this, I got in a fist fight with Henry Avery -- Millie's latest & brief friend of the moment -- in which I was able to severely gouge ~~an eye, which my opponent's finger, and average with only a slight wound on the~~ left ~~eye~~ (the gouged eye his). He left me with Herman at his side, explaining that gentlemen do not settle things in such a barbaric manner, and him (Henry) shouting threats to get a gun and come after me. So I decided to kill him, since he'd initiated the first blow. I went back to the B'House, where the fight started, and tried to figure out whether to use a lead pipe or a knife. Vic finally talked me out of it. So, being now a woman-beater, a street-brawler, and a militant do-nothing -- I was hero of the Quarter. Al Thompson bought me a beer, once, even. Judy Thompson congratulated me on beating up Millie and both agreed I had the makings of a fine writer. Every time I entered the B'House, which became home to me more than ever, it was with a different young lady on my arm than I last went out with. And each time, the various table groups tried to outbid each other for my company... lasted almost a week... I came away richer in friends and more tolerant of the French Quarter way to Western civilization. Even Francisco and I had a couple of bartop discussions and exchanged drink-buying honors. And that, Phil, is how the Quarter got in my blood... upon major publication I may or may not return to school. I just want to spend the major portion of the rest of my life on the banks of the Mississippi, writing at least a page a day, and sailing the trade winds that cross ~~the~~ in the B'House.... Al Thompson coached me on my writing, and I admit, his advice was worth taking... spend a couple of afternoons a week in class at his place or the local saloon..." This, as I see it, is a remarkable self-revelation and contains a number of leads. The letter closes, "Peace, but not ~~surrender~~ at the price of surrender..."

8/31/63, Postcard from Mexico City.

10/3/63, A brief letter announcing his return and "Vic is working in the Outrigger at the Sheraton. Jerry Jennings is sitting here playing word games with Millie's daughter. Dick Hoffman is sitting at the bar, making talking to Pat. Nothing has changed..." Now this is long after the Hoffman breakup and it indicates both may have known Kerry. This letter concludes, with the feigned

7/22/63 -  
Whittier  
Calif.

hand-lettering of a child reading, "My Name is Valerie. I AM in Grade 2 its late abd my eyes ARE Tired. Can I Go and Sleep With You? About the author: Valeria Storm Fletcher is 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ . This is the first creative thing to come out of the B'House in 24 hours."

7/22/63. This is written, rather than printed. It announces his projected return (via Mexico) in September. It concludes "Viva Picaro!" It has a slight poem on the back,

1/23/64, from <sup>31</sup>428 S. 31 St, Apt 2, Salington: "I think the Warren Board will inquisit me soon on the assassination. I was a corps friend of Oswald's. If they really ~~xxxxxx~~ get power to suspend the 5th Amend., I think I'll refuse to testify- punishment or no - out of sheer outrage."

XX By that date no single hearing had been held. There is nothing in any of the files to even indicate there was or had been any intention of calling him as a witness or to "inquisit". The cause of his "outrage" is not clear, but the inference I draw is that anyone would think of trying to punish whoever murdered the President. How strange it is that of all the places he could go to be a door-man, he picked the back yard of the thing he pretended to dislike, the government.

2/14/64-This is the only letter dated internally to this point, and it uses the military day first. It is a curt response to a request for the return of a written proposal for the sale of a poem (dated 2/10) He says he threw it in the trash, because "I don't collect anything very ardently -- not even Objectivist Newsletters. No point in it, the way I figure: Let my grandchildren fend for themselves".

5/1/64, re: "The Battle Of Madison Avenue". It is amazingly reactionary while pretending to be "liberal"-uses that word, despite his Warren Commission testimony

2/8/64 (This one has no envelope) "...I had a bit of luck with The Idle Warriors, which I now rewrite, as it was based on a Marine Corps Buddy of mine who really happens to have been Lee Harvey Oswald. Or did I tell you? Anyway, then and now, it's about a Marine who becomes disillusioned and goes to Russia. Tom ~~XXXXXXXX~~ Sancton sent the final chapter of the old draft to his publisher with a covering letter. So far no word. Meanwhile, I'm redoing it with more unity and more philosophical - political- cultural - demnetion. The whole thing was very interesting for a while, the assassination, because -- on the surface -- there was good reason for the unenlightened SS and FBI to suspect I might've had a hand in it. We had some polite conversations and finally, I guess, I was cleared. No word from them lately. I hope, though, my move to this area scared the piss out of 'em. Whether or not I'll be asked to put my 2¢ in at the Warren Hearing, I don't know. Or care. When it is all over, I'll get 50 pies on JFK's grave, etc. ~~XXXXXXXX~~ next Sat. Eve. Post, if you're interested, I got a note from them that my letter to the Editors -- A sarcastic comment on Arthur Miller's new play -- 'is teabed for possible publication'...Nothing else... excepting a letter from New York -- from Jessica -- asking me to come and live with her, but proposing that we not have sexual relations. My reply was only slightly more cutting than my usual nasty remarks...Ho he ha ho!..."

Unless one of these letters has a reference to "Moonlight", one of the series is missing.

The change in attitude to the Commission and its work is interesting, as is the heroic about being suspect. There is nothing in the available record to substantiate it, but were there grounds, this would be even more interesting.

3332 Harney Street  
Omaha, Nebraska 68131

Sunday  
21 April 1968

Mr. Harold Weisberg  
Route #8  
Frederick, Maryland 21701

Dear Harold,

Here is all the Thornley correspondence, as I found it. I tried to make Xerox copies but several pages seemed not to photograph well and I finally gave up on the project. Anyway, you can keep these awhile--and try your hand at making copies if you want them for your files. Do the same with the A-1 statement and receipts, the W-2 Form (I appear to have been hired by Pelican Printing, to have worked on The Independent American, and been paid by #Free Men Speak, Inc." !), the blockade petition and the Arizona rally announcement draft.

The postmark on the card from Mexico appears to be 31 August 1963; I think I told you I'd remembered receiving it in 1964--but to reach me at the Aquila Court address it would have to arrive in 1963. The letters are obscure in places (and mine are tedious) but I can probably help you if there's something you need to have clarified. I do wish that I'd had them at hand when you were here.

Receipts that I mentioned last time, other than those enclosed here, don't appear to be important enough to send-- but I can now give pretty precise dates of my presence in N.O. I have found a copy of a letter to a friend in Omaha, dated "Little Rock, 29 July 62," and a N.O. Public Service receipt for deposit dated 31 July 62. And a rent receipt indicates I was to vacate the St. Peter Street apt. not later than 10 January 63. The money order stubs are all from the Customs House Station--the only P.O. I recall using while in New Orleans. (It seems to me the Customs House is on the Quarter side of Canal St., not too far from the river. Anyway, I don't recall Kerry ever going with me--but I suppose he could have.)

The small notesheet with the names and dates typed on it represents what I was able to find in the journals; not much, as you can see, but I knew these places and people relatively well. The names on the pieces of paper and cards clipped together I have no recollection of whatsoever (except, of course, Castillo's), but you might show them to Barbara--she might recall something. You needn't return any of the things I've mentioned here in this paragraph, nor the misc. news clippings enclosed.

So. If anything here helps you in any way I'll be pleased to have had a hand in it. And if anything else turns up here--on paper or in my head--I'll let you know.

Best personal regards,

  
Philip Boatright