

399

7/23 69

Dear Dick,

John's interesting letter after his return and yours of the 17th arrived yesterday. What he has from the Navy is the norm on preservation of records, which is important, but the formulation is one permitting the kind of weaseling with which we are too familiar. It is important because it confirms what we know and does require a departure from norm. It may, in fact, prove a violation of regulations. You have a copy by now. If he had called Bud at night, as I suggested, he'd have found him in. Bud and Vivian were here until 6 p.m. He was home by 7. I'm sorry they didn't get together because Bud could have informed him of possible legal weaknesses in his case.

I did not know that Sprague had written a book about the New Orleans trial. I cannot imagine a viable one he is capable of because he is of sycophantic bent and knows none of the fact. He could retread part of Flammonde, which is itself a retreading, throw in a little of his own error, but what else is there? I shudder to think of more of Jim's imaginings being solidified in type. But, with the dismal record of the Flammonde book, I think there is little prospect for its publication. Even less than for solid work, which his, I regret to say, I believe cannot be. Dick has done a good job of gathering pictures, but to him they mean what he wants them to mean, no more, no less. When he decided this, all else evaporates, as my own experience with him on the tramp pictures demonstrates. When I found out, independently, from two separate sources, both in a position to know, that the men were picked up where they could not have been for his theories to be valid, he responded with non-existent proofs that my sources were wrong. I checked each citation he gave me and no one says what he says it does. This sort of thing disturbs me much.

No response on my letter to the Archives on weight of 399. I had planned to go to DC yesterday for a medical appointment but it was postponed until tomorrow. I'll phone then and ask when I may expect reply.

Sprague has been distant since the above incident. Not unfriendly, just distant. I do not hear from him.

On the photo shown Galt: I agree I have no knowledge of that particular one having been published. However, I can see no reason for anyone going to the trouble of have had it printed in the form of a newspaper clipping to show Galt. Can you? What purpose did it serve?

No response from Kesting or the woman. I expect none, but I tried.

BBS, NBC stuff received. Councillor clip enclosed. If I send copy Yard letter, it is because I intend using your copy in offst because it is clearer.

Progress report: add to COUP is now about 60,000 words. I am going at a slower than usual rate because I am trying to rest and relax more. I am not yet really into analysis of Bessley's narrative. That part will be longer than I had anticipated but whether or not desirable from literary point of view it is for every other. Part of conspiracy will also be long. So, it will, in the end, be an enormous work. Too long for commercial possibility. However, I believe it can be shortened to an important, exciting book on the King case only. We'll see.

I never did hear from Trent on Gary Murr's clippings, which he said he intended to be available to all of us. And I did ask. I have gone over Bud's and found a few details I didn't have. His also are not complete. Although just going over these and copying the few I didn't have took two days, and while they didn't add anything new to what I had, I do regard the added detail as important because I do intend thorough documentation, best.

17 July 69

H arold:

I write quickly today.

Negatives from Molesworth arrived today. I expect nothing more; this seems everything I ordered.

Weight of CE 399: Hoover letter to Curry of 23 Nov. designates weight of CE 399 as 158.6 grains (24 H 262). Not sure, but I think Frazier took sliver from nose of bullet after this date.

Roffman's news regarding loss of fragments at Archive may still be useful if he follows it up well. I informed Nichols about this.

Thanks for info on FBI blackmail on King. The Councilor story was news-- to me. I suspected truth of stories of King's communist contacts, but had no notion of sex life.

Enclosed is Xerox of the photo that was shown to Galt. According to Sprague, this photo and no part of this photo ~~was~~ ever appeared anywhere in published form. Some "buffs" have it and a couple of newsmen may have it, but sprague thinks it was never published. Assuming that is true, the "truck driver" had it made up as a newspaper clipping specifically for Galt's viewing. I think the whole operation was too fancy, too elaborate, to have been done by newsman checking on Galt. Naturally, I can't be sure.

I'll press McRae again for the addresses of Van Leuven and Keating.

I returned to you the stuff that I borrowed on CBS TV show and NBC on Garrison. If you do not receive them in reasonable time, tell me.

Return to me the Councilor copy that I loaned. No rush.

I received your letter to Claire Keating and suitable copy of Scot. Yard letter to Dawnay. Also L.M. Stone (Lil) letter to Councilor.

Friction seems over between me and Sprague. Much was my fault, the result of misinterpretation induced by a touch of paranoia.

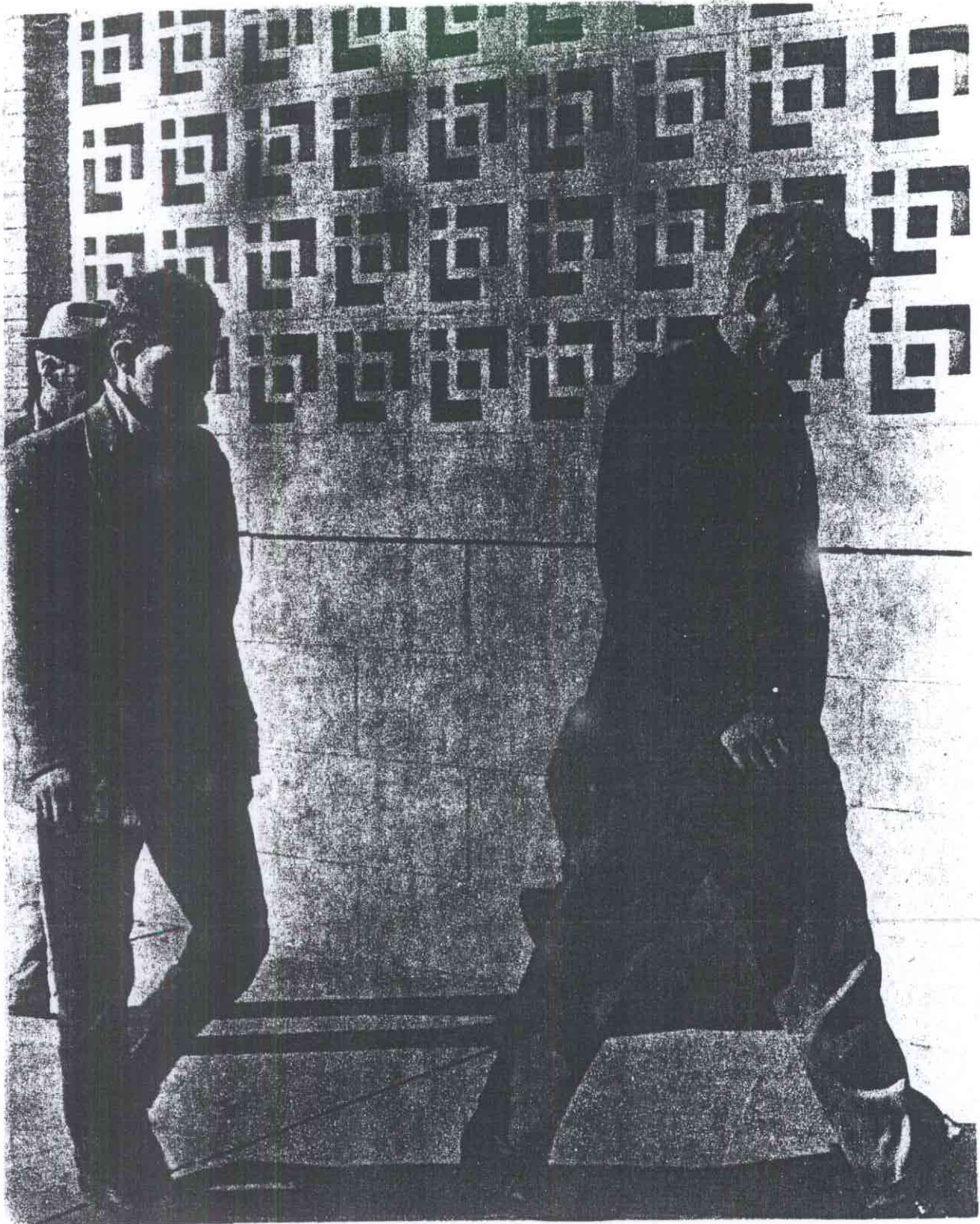
You must know that Sprague has written a book on the Garrison-Shaw trial. I have not read it and know nothing about it. He was looking for a publisher some time ago and is still looking.

Still,

Dak

BERNARD





PICTURE SHOWN TO ERIC GALT IN TORONTO