

2/22/72

Mr. W.R. Childress, Editor
The Knoxville Journal
Knoxville, Tenn.

Dear Mr. Childress,

This evening, on a radio station that was fading while I was driving, I heard part of a wire-service report that Ray had written a Knoxville editor to claim that he was in bed at the time of his recent alleged escape attempt. I find it difficult to believe, and I tell you frankly it is entirely inconsistent with the impression I formed of Warden Moore.

This entire thing leaves me perplexed. One of the reasons I write is to ask for all the information you can give me so I can ponder all possible aspects. I tell you frankly that the last time I saw Ray, which was when I saw you, I left completely convinced that he would make no such attempt as long as any legal remedy remained a possibility. He was aware that this would take time. He seemed satisfied that the law was on his side, as I also believe it is.

I presume the regional wires carried what did not make the national wire a week ago. The Washington Star carried a small story I did not see. The Post carried nothing. The Washington all-news radio stations seemed to carry nothing, but there was a mention on one of the wire-service radio wires. I first heard of it on a pre-dawn broadcast from Chicago last Wednesday, when it was day-old news. So, anything you have or can supply could be of importance to me.

It is inconceivable to me that if he made such an attempt, and I have no reason to doubt the official announcement, that he was all alone. My opinion is that he would have required help on the outside as a certainty and on the inside as at least a high probability. Without someone outside, I think the prospect of escape, assuming he could have gotten out, are close to nil. I think he also knows this. If I am correct, this then means that he has to have had some contact with someone. This need not have been direct contact. I do not think it likely any such attempt would be made by mail. I can think of very, very few people willing to run the risk of helping him and almost none who regard his survival with any degree of satisfaction. This is one of the reasons I am anxious for all the information, no matter how seemingly insignificant, that I can get. I think I have some knowledge others do not, hence something that might mean nothing to others might suggest possibilities to me.

I have written him a long, blunt letter to which, if he is not under restrictions, he has not had time to respond, if he will. I have written with more force to Jerry, who said, if Bynum Shaw quoted him correctly, what he has to know is not true. I find myself wondering about this Esquire article and its timing - indeed, that it was published at all. I doubt you are in a position to understand how completely dishonest it is, how often in error that cannot, in a professional, be considered accidental, and how heavily it misuses unattributed sources. One reporter who covered the trial phoned me this afternoon after reading it to raise a long series of questions. In every case, depending on recollection only and after this lapse of time, the reporter was correct, Shaw wrong.

Thanks for any help you may be able to provide. Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg