

11/11/71

Jp,HR,RB,

Two of you will be able to put this in a certain context. Dick will not, but I think he will take my word for it that telling him what calls to mind the fragment from the past would not serve a useful purpose and could be exacerbating when there has been too much hurt. I wrote JP and HR and a third person earlier today, Dick, about a letter to a fourth who wants to pre-empt doctrine and content from some of my work as a condition of getting it printed under some circumstances not nearly as clear as they seem to be and until a letter I got today, under a mortgage that could mean permanent non-printing. I declined and made a counter-offer entirely consistent with the norm and not exceeding it. So, in the few minutes before supper,

Had I included this in the letter that also went to the third person, of whom I am very fond, it is conceivable he would have taken offense not because of my intent, for it is not relevant to him (but I anticipate he may be a bit sensitive now), but because he might have misunderstood, thought I was being subtle.

Twice in the early days with WHITEWASH publishers had outside readings. Well, more than that of which I know, but twice in a relevant context. The first time, after the top exec. under the owner flipped over the idea and the book, he asked if I minded if he asked a friend who was familiar with the subject and was writing his own book on it. I said I had no objection, and we talked about other things, like his flattering recollection of my rather spectacular first assignment in OSS, where he had been in headquarters. From it he knew me but I didn't know him. And that was as of then 20 years in his past, so you can see the impression that job made on him, huh? Well, later he told me his friend was Isaac Don Levine! And now you perhaps know why two things didn't happen: Levine never wrote his book and McKay didn't publish WHITEWASH. However, interestingly enough, this guy was all for it after Levine's report. His is one of the letters on the inside back cover of WW, original ed., the one that talks about foreign sales.

The other case I didn't know about until two years after it happened. Parallax was started by young, principled people who got turned off when Barney Rosset began to convert Grove from the principled controversy to the debasing of sex. I had heard of them, phoned them, they were excited at the whole idea, I took the ms. too then, they also flipped, and then one editor thought of a friend, also an "expert". So, with Parallax real hot, having just made a successful beginning with The Auto. of Malcolm X and Look for a two punch, which in 1965 WW sure as hell could have been under commercial auspices, this youthful editor took the ms. to said "friend". His report was that the book was shot full of inaccuracies. I was outraged and asked for a confrontation with this "expert", but he and/or they declined it, so I went my weary way. Who d'ya suppose I learned it was in 1967? Newman!

Norton held onto WW for months and months, and finally had me meet with an aging former "liberal" who still conceived himself as such, a venerable lawyer named Wittenberg. He went whole-hog the other way and stipulated as a condition that the book be converted into the open charge that there was a government conspiracy. HR can evaluate the reception to any such suggestion, much more modest than this, even today. But who could responsibly make such a charge? And prove it? With what was available in 2/65 yet!

When I tell you younger ones that there is something intelligence can't replace, and that is experience, and that I must be guided by my experience and what intelligence I have, there are many such things that are long before your times but very much part of my life, and it is as irrational as it is wrong to ask or expect me to forget or ignore them.

The OSS thing, by the way, was a dilly. It is the job that awaited me when I was cleared by security (yup, it happened!). There was this brave young bunch of volunteers scheduled for an almost certain-death, behind-Nazi-lines airdrop. They got into an innocent fight started by the MPs in suburban DC, who ought have known better, these men having been

taught payhem with more care than grammer is taught today. All the MPs were battered, one had a broken jaw, the OSS boys were framed and convicted, and through all the channels of what is without a smile called military justice the convictions had been sustained. But Wild Bill Donovan was a very fatherly cat, and he was also convinced of the innocence of his brave boys who had told him their story. Among those lawyers who had failed is the other Donovan, of the Powers and Bay of Pigs prisoners swaps. He was one of the top legal eagles in OSS. Others have since become famous in other ways. I was never told why this job awaited me in the section to which I had been assigned, for it never dealt with legal matters. I always supposed that in the investigation before I was drafted from the Army some of my exposes of Nazi cartels, their intelligence operations, and perhaps the caper in which I got what FDR used in his famous Latin America fireside chat on the Nazi danger there had turned up. Anyway, there was this assignment, with no strings or stipulations. Do it my way, and do what I thought could be done or what I might be able to do. Six weeks later, when I had not during working hours been out of my office except to go to HQ to get the existing records in the case, the men were free. With nothing but what I found that the big legal talent had missed.

In its own way, although I was then younger than any of you but HR, this weighs heavily in the balance when I make judgements today. It has given me a kind of confidence.

There is a P.S. The Lt. who had done the framing, a Boston cop who made this rank in the Army by being a nasty, committed suicide. That was not in my plans.

Anyway, thought this reminiscence might entertain you, help explain things, and relax me a bit, for that other thing remains a hangup. I do not anticipate any correspondence from any of you on it, but if you feel impelled to write, be certain that whatever you may doesn't reach here after 11/15, for I want none of this brought back to Ed's mind. It hurt her much, and each reminder is painful.

On the panel part of PM: RB has sent me a suggestion for inclusion of a brief bit on his interpretation of what he got from Morgan, which I buy. I think it is significant. However, in order to be able to get this part corrected on the masters before I leave, so that Ed won't have to kill herself re-indexing after I return (and she can't index without final page nos.) I'll be adding that as a note at the end of the relevant chapter, if there is enough blank space on that page, or in notes at the end of the whole mess, a la F-U.

As JP concludes,

Peace!

