

12/9/74

Dear Jim, McKinley

Our letters crossed by about a minute! I had to go into town this a.m. so I deposited the mail and then got mine from the rural route man. I read your letter while I was walking from the post office to the bank, a block.

First, on the Star review: if it is not too late, please try to include my address. All the straight AM stations are doing this and including the price. This means no wasted time in correspondence for me and for the one who wants the book, no more than a check and a note and the book goes by return mail. Without the address, with the books not in the stores, it becomes a futility for the reader and for us.

Not considering other costs, which are very real, I have recovered enough from sales almost 100% attributable to by-phone radio to expect to give Jim a check tomorrow that will enable him to repay 20% of what he borrowed to pay the printer. This is gross, of course. It doesn't even include postage. Or many, many other costs. I do the packaging to the evening TV news, an hour here, and when that isn't enough time, to the next a.m.'s. Ever hear of such a publishing outfit?

We are in complete accord on what you say of the values in the interview. If I did not believe it can be arranged I'd not have written early this morning. However, those other questions, those not dealing with his conditions, really should be approved in advance by lawyers because there can be unintended and unperceived dangers in what may appear to be completely innocent. In this case it is more important because it provides a means of coping with the situation. And I do not believe this would eliminate the need for both Jim and me to be present. In all interests, particularly if the warden, who is the respondent in the suit and who I've caught in further violations of Jimmy's rights, refuses access. That would make an even better story and we could still get around all the major problems in writing.

If this can't come to pass, then I am all for your doing a story. What you do is entirely your own affair and I would not consider intruding into it. I would, however, help in any way possible and think a really responsible piece would require some consultation. This is but one of the reasons I recommended our getting together first, to eliminate what can be and to prepare better. Including with more understanding. The fact that you will do a story anyway may help. I take it this is not in confidence so I'll merely mention it for now. I don't want to take any time from Jim's limited period for response to Halle's incredible dishonesties. And I'm staying away from Bud because I don't want to fight when it is not necessary. Or embarrass him needlessly.

At this point I had to talk to Jim about another printer snafu: non-delivery of envelopes for a mailing. So, we talked about other things, too, and I suggested that Bud might well take a lesser-evil thinking line on the interview, regarding an interview as a potential evil inferior in potential to a story including opinion.

I've lost what I had in mind, so I'll add something I see in the interview that you appear not to. Jimmy is hardly a Dreyfus but I know of no other man in modern history who has spent as much time in solitary. To me, and I think he will emerge in any good interview as the living, fighting symbol of all the penal abuses that are so great a curse upon society and so frightful an abuse of so many humans a fair percentage of whom are innocent.

As of the beginning of the evidentiary hearing I had no further literary interest in this whole affair with one exception, an old one. I'd like sometime to do a piece on The Author's Intrusion Into the Processes of Justice. After Henry's initial abuse I was tempted in that direction but abandoned it. However, as I went over his monstrous Memorandum and made these notes I came to realize that what I was also doing is an Anatomy of a Frame-Up. I do see future possibility and at some time it would be good if we could discuss

this and potential of the past you appear not to have seen but two different Hollywood interests have. One has been in touch with me off and on and the other is busily off track, suing the guy they hired to steal my stuff. There is a fine movie and a book. New book.

That nothing can persuade me to wear both my hats at once or to mix them up presents no problem in this. But you should be aware of it. I believe that he who would teach the pope religion ought go to church himself. And I don't want to write another book on this. However, I would welcome being part of one and what it could lead to and if it done straight, not an Executive Action crapola, I have no compromises to consider and no restraints.

I do face self-imposed restraints. I'll address one in responding to your final graf. Conflicts, too. How much do I tell Jimmy and what do I not tell him that maybe he should know is one. I am never absolutely certain so I do what I think best and never anything I think wrong or unethical. Here Bud presents a major conflict and problem. He is the source of the major financing of Jimmy's defense. Without it there is no financing and while Jim and I work free and bear some of our expenses, Bud does pay for such things as my air fare, hotel and meals when he "permits" me to go off and work. Without this the work I did for the habeas corpus petition would have been impossible. I have no real or regular income. Jim's situation differs only in that his wife is younger and has a much better income. Without this I would not have been able to be in Memphis for the hearing. You have no real idea of how important it was that I be there and what I prevented and what I was able to do. For it and for the future, on which I spent the last two days. So, instead of telling Jimmy that Bud is timid and a fuckup I do what I can to keep Bud straight and we accomplish as much as we can for Jimmy. There is no other way. Unless, for example, some foundation would undertake the financing of his defense. I know of none and if I did have no way of approaching it. If I did I'd long ago have made arrangements for myself because a major State historical society wants my work and files for a permanent archive and a college does. It is not a comfortable situation, not an easy one; but not an entirely impossible one. The one real comfort for me in it is less. He is a fine human being and while he made mistakes (less than should be expected), he has done what in every way I can describe as a remarkable job, without any ego involvement. So, while it borders on malpractice for Bud to have been on vacation while we were into discovery and preparing the case, he'd have fucked up what we accomplished on discovery. He did fuckup what he was supposed to do with it. If he had balls we could have sneded this case in your face. But in the last analysis, he pays most of the bills and if they are not paid Jimmy has no defense. I can't go farther into debt at 61 and Jim's wife is pregnant. On Sunday, October 13 I gave him what could have ended the case and saved much money for him. He and his partner, who also came here, saw it and agreed. But when it made demands on Bud he was chicken and didn't do it. This, too, is what underlies that of which you know part. He can't face that with himself so in his mind he lays it on me.

If you haven't realized it, what all that outpouring of the unedited incorporate was designed to and succeeded in keeping Bud from just coping out.

So, give me what I need in writing and leave the interview up to me. If it can't be done, then do a story and I'll help you with it.

Bud's ostensible hangup is that this may be rewarding to Jim or me, mostly me. On that he is hungup personally, emotionally, and in the (legitimate) fear that something properly subject to criticism might evolve. I see nothing wrong with Jimmy receiving pay for the interview, if that is in your mind. And you and I have no deal for money. This is why I leaned on Bud for that rot he wrote for Esquire, for which he was paid and it was one of the things Haile could and did use against us.

It has received no press attention, but the precedent we have set on discovery is now before the Supreme Court. They have asked for a filing from us on it. We'll get on it after the final papers are filed the end of this week.

Best,

P.S. about your P.S. I know nothing about any Sun-Times story and I'm not certain what you mean about a Village Voice story. I don't get it. Ron Rosenbaum phoned me for background before a projected interview on the Ray case. I was rather surprised to hear he had written a story. I have no objection. And he didn't phone back. I have been sent a xerox of that story, enclosed. If this is not what you had in mind, please tell me. But I do not have any other Village Voice story from any recent issue.

I don't know anyone on the Sun-Times. However, I have a friend on the companion paper, Larry Winley, Chicago Daily News, city room (312/321-2121; 401 N. Wabash Ave, 60611). If they do not have a common morgue, GDN files S-T stories. Larry might be able to provide what you want. He's a good reporter and a fine guy.

If the story relates to me or to the Ray case, please ask Larry to send me a copy.

Haven't heard from him for a while.

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