

8/14/72

Dear Larry,

With a pending strike, I presume the shop steward is busier than usual. However, if there is a strike and the shop steward is then even busier, is it possible he knows a good reporter, prof. courts, police, who will scrupulously maintain confidence, who might get interested in the Rife case? I wrote you ^{2 weeks ago} about some aspects, I think including his comment on the downstate situation, Judge Roardon, etc. I can understand the silence with a strike pending and hot negotiations, etc.

I have copies of all Rife's letters to me except the last already made, if I've not sent them to you already. The last includes what he clearly intends as a legal document for use in his defense because it was made with a typewriter, permitted in Leavenworth for legal uses only; because it greatly exceeded the number of pages they are permitted to send at one time; and because it has on the envelope initials I recognize as those of his case worker, to whom I've spoken and with whom I had a pleasant meeting (federal rap at least is a bum one in his opinion).

When one deals with criminals, one always wonders about truth, about whether the source can distinguish it. In this case he includes an affidavit that is close to confirmation of a key part of his Quincy story and can be exactly that.

I have to go to DC tomorrow. I'll take this latest with me on the chance I can get it copied there, for I have no legal paper and can't afford any. I rarely make legal-sized copies anyway. If I do, I still won't send it unless and until I hear from you.

~~That some of his story seems pretty far out troubles me even less since the Gawain~~
disclosures, and that it seemed far out earlier was no deterrent. Of some of the seemingly less credible, I do have confirmation (~~and about~~ to bastardize the lawyer's phrase, confirmation against interest).

If any substantial part of this story stacks, it is a helluva story. And remember, I do have his map of how to find the stuff he hid inside the jail bearing on how he got out and how he could not have. He tells me pictures exist showing how he could not have and where to find them.

As I remember it, over and above the bum fed rap he has about 50 years to do for a petty theft if he is guilty. He alleges open violation of Illinois law to make this state conviction possible, and if the law provides what he says, checking is so simple it can be done with a couple of phone calls.

I have not dubbed the several hours of taped interviews some of which he asked me to hold in confidence, so I have to ~~duh~~ with care and with my notes in hand in case he asked it later.

Meanwhile, from another source, NOT him, my latest selection from the prison grapevine is that a man suspected of being the real Raoul of James Ray's story was picked up in Arizona with his hair dyed blond and quietly, on other charges. He is said to have 120 years in jail ahead of him. His ~~secret~~ came to me through censorship, that is, was subject to censorship and is from a prisoner whose every word is, I suspect, more than just read. No, not James.

Of course, all of this is predicated on potential interest of your pa per. If you think otherwise, who you trust I trust. But I don't want this guy or his family hurt. One of the disturbing elements is his wife's silence. I was to have heard from her by now. From the first he has described her as frightened and intimidated. This may or may not account for her silence.

If you don't go on strike, watch for signs of revanchist-Uban inspired or triggered or agent-provocateured demonstrations at the Bullsville in Miami next week. Strong hunch that was real purpose of the already-accounted \$114,000. But if you do go on strike, see if you can arrange for Bob to do a little work to which I can appoint him in old records in Washington. If that hunch pays off, this becomes a sensation. More than the \$\$\$, more than the Martha "liberating John part, more than anything to date. I think the chances are fairly good, but even if it doesn't hit pay dirt it should be more than interesting enough to justify the time and might turn up other stories.

The friend who ~~tabulated~~ ^{tabulated} Hunt's representation of Hunt's career has updated it. I'll try to get copies made tomorrow, when I won't have to pay for them. Otherwise, I'll soon make and send unless you have lost interest.

Best,