

Dear Larry,

7/28/72

Glad to hear from you and to know the multipurpose plumbing is ok. After we spoke I read a couple of letters I got. I enclose the first page of one from John Ray. One from Rife is too long for copying in the time I have. The rest of John's letter is irrelevant to my hope, that you may be able to find something out about this mysterious Varmel or whoever and his plane crash, which I believe did make the news. When John was arrested, as John tells it, he suddenly turned up as John's cellmate knowing more about John than anyone. I believe I mentioned this earlier. I am reasonably certain John is away on account of being James' brother, not driving a getaway car in a bank heist. And too many wrong things happened in the trial. It is setting one of the most repressive precedents possible, one admirably suited to political cases. Nobody is paying any attention to it. We can't even get copies of the court of appeals decision from his lawyer or of the petition cert he says he filed with the Supreme Court.

Got interrupted no. after 7 7/28. First 20 minutes CBS TV a.m. news devoted to dumping McGovern, with even Valifano, who didn't say or urge it, used to say how it could be done without a convention. This was followed by Spock and Peoples' Party position, that McG can't deliver on non-end the war problems. I find myself wondering how they can. My hunch is that the howlers are not concerned about E's capacity to carry on if something happens as much as they fear the changes in political-aprty control that has begun. The complaints are from those who never had it so good and now want it even better. All these great "liberals" now sounding off have to know they are electing Nixon, not "strengthening" the only voices for anything like basic changes since FDR's first campaign. That they don't want.

Until you can get your downstate man ~~more~~ interested, if this happens, let me give you a few names I've gotten from Rife. He has given me an affidavit from an alibi witness who places him sufficiently far away from the scene of the robbery not to have been able to commit it. All Quincy stuff. Arresting detective, Lamb. Original attorney, Russell Goehl, partner John Adams (most trial work). Judge ^{John} Reardon (chief local judge). Reardon appointed Hubert G. Staff to handle appeal. Rife says there is no chance of justice, less for a man with a record, and that all is corruption there, with improprieties presided over and initiated by the judges, esp. Reardon. One of his lawyers was a judge's law partner.

In addition to what he had given me earlier and what I have on several hours of an in-jail interview, taped, he has now sent me 8 single-spaced typewritten pages. It is not the 10 minutes copying would take that deters me. It is the buck the paper would cost. So, I'll defer that until there is reason to believe somebody will go for the story when it has his o.k., as it will when the right time comes, and then I'll have more. I'll dub those parts of the interview that are relevant and send copies of his earlier letter, if I haven't. I do think finding the good-faith evidence he planted can help make a story. As of now, with all the detail he has provided, my major concern is his wife's silence. He has just said I should surely be hearing from her soon. He is what would be called an habitual criminal. But his own case worker, with an Army career as background (retired) told me Rife has a legitimate been on the federal rap he is serving. This makes me inclined toward crediting him. And the nature of the sentence, even if he were guilty, up to 50 years, is vengeful and barbaric. This is to follow his federal time. And there seems to be an open and shut case that he was no longer subject to prosecution under Illinois law because the state had delayed too long bringing him back for trial. I think the limit is 120 days after possibility, in this case arrest in Denver.

When he had John were both put away on at best dubious raps, he with a record of earlier association with James and a story of more recent association at a time uncongenial to others as of that period and to the government and with John the more dependable of James' outside connections (and there are others), it looks just a bit too much like somebody wants everyone with any James connection put away. They can do it to Jerry any time they want, but I think **two things: they can learn from him what they may want to keep up with, without his knowing it, and with his connections with me and with Stoner, there might be too great a liability.** Conjecture, of course....What are your new hours and times off -until huelga.

Best,