

4/9/72

Dear Jerry,

After writing you yesterday, I began to wonder if in trying to help you understand I may have, in part, given you a misunderstanding, about Frank, me and the apparent fear of me. I may have a few minutes now. Expected guests are late. I can't read much of Frank's book at one time, not at my age. It is like eating too much rich chocolate at one sitting. Stomach refuses it.

As I told you would happen, he is beginning to get rave reviews. Some are modest. Only one I've seen has been bad. This is predictable. It is like whores saying that sex is a thing unto itself. That you fuck for the sake of fucking, love being immaterial and a superficial emotion. The most successful whores are really lesbians. This is a skill they practise and learn to excel in, as others do in typing or shorthand. So it is with literary criticism and with writing. Frank has mastered all the little devices of literary whoring and all the pimps are pushing him. But he emerges the equivalent of a lesbian.

This, not physical fear, is why he fears me. He knows I know the stuff. He knows he has done a deliberately dishonest job and for money and nothing else. He is having trouble living with it. Despite his present unhappiness, this will be a pain George McMillan will be spared.

Some writers do this as a means of making honorable things possible. Once I did a series of interviews for a book-and-author show. They included the guy who wrote another kind of formula book, The Exhibitionists. It was a cheap, manufactured, out-and-out sex book, the kind I consider dirty. I asked him about me. He told me two things that stick in my mind. If I can't be sure he told me the truth, what he said can be credited. He said that first of all it was a challenge, like a carpenter undertaking a particularly difficult job of a kind he has never tackled before. It is challenging to him to be able to figure out how to do it and satisfaction to him when he has accomplished it. But more important, he is a poet, and he couldn't get his poetry printed under his own name. Once he became a success with filth (with is not the same as sex), all his poetry was in demand, and the creative work he enjoyed suddenly became successful. Frank does not have this to fall back on. So, he is also unhappy. He can't even tell himself he is a jogolo.

So, I don't want you to think that what I was telling you is that I am something special and that is why Foreman fled and Frank shakes. This is not the case. They both know how I can fight, and in Frank's case he knew I was under commitment to the station to take it easy on Huie and Dyer. And they both know I have done the work on the fact, my own work. I didn't read the handouts of others, as Frank did. He can't even pronounce the names of key witnesses, so I know he never spoke to them. He hasn't the remotest idea of how rifles work or the differences in calibres, projectiles and their characteristics, etc. If he did he'd have stopped early in his book and learned for himself, as I did. He has all of this backward because he was dependant upon the fakery of those manufacturing the fake. If, as most country boys do, you have an understanding of this, then read with care what he says in a short chapter, IV. This would have been a prosecution disaster in court. It is one of the reasons the case couldn't go to trial. And can you imagine a man who has ever taken a good look at a pump gun saying Jimmy didn't have it loaded and then put a single load in the breach by hand and reserved the clip for emergency? Wow!

This book is as much a manufacture as a wooden chair. Frank and possibly an editor or editors merely did a lot of snappapering before they put the sheen on. I hope this helps your understanding and eliminates a possible misunderstanding, that I was trying to present myself as something extraordinary, and that is why Frank is afraid. Don't underestimate him. And he is a skilled and smooth fillibusterer, too.

Hastily,