

Dear Pearl,

7/20/73

My life these days centers are two things: taking Lil to and from her part-time work and The Watergate. I can't keep up with the latter, not the way I should, even after abandoning most other activities. So, that I make immediate response, or at least begin it in the few minutes before the broadcast of today's hearings, please take as a token of affection, concern and a desire to be helpful.

Lil read your letter of the 16h to me as I drove her from the post office to her office, after which I did our grocery shopping and stored it (no chauvenist pigs because while the broadcast is on I'll put the laundry away, too.)

There are some things I can address in these few minutes without rereading your letter. Emotional problems are one. First, understand we we live with an oversupply, and they are not the byproduct of the work for which I am known but the consequences of the ruin of our farm and farming by military helicopters. Strange but true. If there is one paramount consideration in coping with emotional problems it is to cope, to content, to work at ones work, to be, somehow and in some way, productive. Your uneasiness the first night you were here signalled some. The cause became apparent as we talked, the family problems. It also became apparent and very soon, that you respond to warmth and welcome, and with this you became first your natural self and then showed no sign of the troubles you have.

From this the amateur shrink in me tells me that a major part of the influences of such problems you can escape, and I mean this in the non-evasive sense. Not just forget but temporarily but overcome.

In doing this independence is necessary. I don't mean non-male associations, but I mean standing on your own feet, financially in particularly. Or, a job. So, you've got the beginning. If you continue writing, you'll get a kind of meaningful fulfillment from that, become more of a whole person again. And while your former husband is out of sight and the kids are not immediately a responsibility, this is your time.

Were it not for the need for independence and the need to be productive for yourself, I'd renew the invitation to come here because I sure could use the kind of help you can give, but you must look out for your own interests first. And with the theft of your work, it is possible that L.A. is for the present the best spot. Later I'll come back to this. If you like New York, plan to go there. I find the place unhuman and dehumanizing. But I'm not a New Yorker. However, I do believe standing on your own feet is presently more important to you than any other consideration.

Striso and the clip I've not read on the news subverting us with heroin: Both I repeat are very bad medicine. The headline tells me I saw the story locally a while back. It is a spook/revanchist politics fake. I repeat with blunt simplifications: People have an inner consistency, as so do some governments, of which the Chinese is a prime example. It is in no way an abandonment of principle for them to now be dealing with us, so when it became possible because of Nixon's need, they deal. Heroin is something of which they are utterly incapable. The blunt parallel is people and their sexual capabilities. There are some men who are, to use the most bad phrase, bi-sexual. Ruby was one. I have friends of the past who are this way. Others are completely, both emotionally and physically, incapable of a heterosexual relationship. Perhaps you know this. It is different with women. In my recent work, when I was well past 60, I learned for the first time that an appreciable percentage of whores are really lesbians. These are also the most successful whores. So, to take the example of the genuine male homosexual, this is a kind of parallel with the canard that the red Chinese are pushing heroin. It is, for them, an impossibility.

Why Striso keeps pushing this fake I don't know but I do know, in the sense of as much certainty as one can have, that when he does, my association with him is bad. That simple. Or, if you will- over-simple. I didn't know he was behind that Wu Sha-jen testimony.

That he made it to the Senate Internal Security Committee is a most dubious thing in itself, if you know them. And if Striso has any such connection, then there has to be much more doubt about him. I wish you could take this on faith if no other basis because if am positive and I don't want you hurt.

Break for another Striso, Robert Mardian.

By the way, can you recommend a good or more than one good Mexico City reporter who could do some checking there? Would your Velasquez give a private rundown on Ogarrio Daguerre? It could be important.

Ogarric D again: through his son he denied having gotten or issued checks. ⁺ It seems to me that if truthful, this involves Mexican crime, hence at least the possibility of Mexican investigation. If it turns out that the son spoke less than the truth, we have new directions in which to seek truth. I have my own suspicions, but no proof.

Striso again: The obvious import is that he is part of an anti-Chinese (red) operation of some kind. Aside from the hazard of any such association in general, for one who is without political experience like you it is greater. Heed me.

Highly-recommended lawyers: one with an international reputation allowed the statute of limitations to run against Idi's and my interest. A law student knows better. Earlier I alone stopped this running. So, reputation means little. Interest and performance do.

From what you told me earlier, I'd say the Ramparts-Inkle deal is not exactly a sale, which may or may not make a legal difference. But if there was no deal involving Ramparts with a percentage, what is there to levy against? And if Ramparts is to get, say 10% and you can hope for a percentage of that, what the hell is there left?

If your lawyer has any compromising connection with Columbia Pictures, you do need another, except for the working out of a compromise acceptable to you. If that is to be done, it must be done immediately or you'll be shafted regardless of what happens.

If the screen writer is a client of his, then his conflict is irreconcilable. However, if he has told the screen writer and that writer proceeds, your prospects are much better if and when, with another lawyer, you do proceed. Esp. is said writer does not check with you. Don't you take the initiative with him.

I am aware of the problems of the impoverished litigant, being one. But I have also learned that a suit with a lawyer who will do nothing is worse than none at all. Shop around. Try. If you have a case, the percentage can yield a lawyer more than his usual fee.

You are right to divorce yourself in any suit from Striso, who probably has nothing to begin with save what he got from others. Besides, he is dangerous, as a co-litigant and potentially as a witness.

Fensterwald would not touch this and if he did would be a disaster. Striso has no such thing as an "in". Bud is representing me now, in a simple suit and if there is anything that can be done to mess it up that he hasn't, I haven't been able to conceive it. Besides, he is in Washington, and the major suit is in LA, the minor in NYC. So much for Striso's judgement, too.

Mayer at Avon is as unconscionable as anyone in an utterly unconscionable business. However, he pays well, and if he has a concept that doesn't present integrity problems, try it out. You should understand that two books dealing with the same subject are not unusual, not is similar treatment. Often the second does better than the first, which sometimes does little more than provoke interest. Your telling it the way it happened in first person, with a proper perspective on the escape, is not the same as the theft anyway. What happened to Vidal can be part of the Mayer concept. The existing book is a bomb. There is little prospect of a reprint, not, at least, unless the movie is a success. So, Mayer's would be an original for the mass market. His view is sensible.

Mayer will sue for a book. Avon tried to get me to file an injunction against a book they were bringing out before it came out. I had a legit suit but wouldn't file it. Mayer correctly estimated that even bad publicity would sell his book. So, if he does your book, you may have an ally, by no means sure. But he'd have an interest.

I see nothing wrong with "she comes up like the virgin Mary" as relating to Irma, the whore (for the role she has the perfect name!) Decency is in the mind and heart, not the body. Long ago I suggested treating her like a decent human. Is there something wrong with this? Is there doubt that she had some genuine feeling for Joel? Or has she not for her kids? (Is he helping with them, by the way?)

If you do the Vidal sequel, what happens to that of which it is sequel?

Hope this may be helpful. Good luck and right decisions. I'm back to the grind.

10380 Wilshire Blvd
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July 16, 1973

Dear Harold,

Good hearing from you . And don't want to renew our long standing disagreement but look what I saw in the paper the other day. The original source to me of this was Striso, and if it makes matters worse, he is the one who told me Garrison would be in Washington - and added to this, at the time I was working for Ramparts and Striso's ms. got distributed, Garrison was one of the recipients and remarked that much of it really checked out.

I don't understand the legal machinations of my case hardly at all. I checked with a friend's son who is a lawyer and who highly recommended mine and who agreed with him, too. Said that if Ramparts sold the files with a percentage of the ensuing book and picture I could collect a percentage of that. I am not clear on my lawyer's approach to Columbia pictures, but I do know he would prefer not to sue them. I think they are or have been a client of his. I don't know. I do know he's been trying to get me to work as a consultant on the movie so he doesn't have to sue them and I know it all sounds fishy, but the truth is, it's purely coincidence that the screen writer is a client of his. And the other truth is, I'm in no position to be choosy, since I haven't money to lay out to sue and he's willing to do it. He can back out, but he hasn't. In fact, at the moment he's busy reading the book when he can. And - Striso has offered to join forces with me because he thinks jointly we stand a better chance! I politely told him my lawyer only wants to represent me. Striso says he has an in to Fensterwald whom he will try to get to represent him in a law suit. God, what a mess.

Meanwhile, back at the typewriter, you've inspired confidence in this fading lily, and I'm writing a first chapter which I shall submit to Peter Mayer of Avon who told me last December to do it - only he wasn't interested in it from my point of view. Wanted the story the way it happened which would have made no sense since a book was already on the way. It mentions Irma's plight in jail by the way (she comes up like virgin mary!) - but I have another angle. What happened to Vidal! I still can tell it from first person woman reporter as you suggested - and thanks for the push. I have so many family problems I've lost sight of the fact I'm supposed to be a writer. Some day will tell you. It's easy to lose your perspective and get lost in insulting mundane nuisances.

I really don't like L. A. and will hang around until the end of the year because other than the law suit I've connected with

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a producer who is looking over a science-fiction short story I did - and it occurs to me the Kaplan movie could have a sequel on what happened to Vidal which I shall present to him soon. While I'm here I might at least try. That alone is a satisfaction. Maybe it sounds mad, but I would like to live in New York if there is no reason to stay here. I need the stimulation - bad and good. The worst thing that can happen to me is peace and quiet - it's like being dead and knowing it!

Keep in touch and best of luck with your projects.

Best to you and Lil.

Paul