

10/7/68

Dear Matt,

Why I was a young man, two friends bought a 38-foot cabin cruiser. She came with the name Virginia; they changed it to the C. Phyllis. We had some rare times on the Chesapeake and Delaware Bays, and I know, or at least remember from many years back, what it is to man the pumps in a bad storm; the exultation of it, and the peace it can bring.

Your letter dated 9/29 arrived today. The postmark is not legible. Maybe you delayed mailing it? I'm very glad to have that picture and to show it to Lil, who has seen none of you. Great. Unkind to Jeanine, tho.

I do not think you understand by feeling about Ben. I am aware of and respect the things he has done. They are important. We are all in his debt for having done them. But the same was true in Italy and Germany, and look what happened when those who could do stopped doing what must be done. That is happening here, and there is no basis for expecting different results.

No rush on any of the pictures. I can make do with what I have on Z.

Agreed on Aing. I expect to begin writing the additions tomorrow and to have them done before I leave. I now think I have a reservation on a different plane and different line. I should get to New Orleans at 2:35 p.m., a better time. I may want to stay with you, at least part of the time. Thanks.

I disagree with Vince on what can be accomplished NOW and believe every effort must be made to accomplish it right now. The trenches are the last place to fight, not the first. Fascism does not wait if anti-fascists are silent, quiet, inactive. Rather than outstripping this issue, current events give it more significance, as I see it. While it is not the only issue, it will come to be understood as the operative one, that from which all others stem. Had I been able to get a lawyer, for example, to file certain suits two years ago, by now certain things, today unknown, might be well understood. Everything could have been different. Would it have been? Now who can tell? There was no such lawyer, still seems not to be. Vince is dispirited, and this attitude dominates and directs his thinking and his expression of it.

There will be one thing different on this trip. I will be the luncheon guest of the publisher of your local newspapers! Nice invitation came today. Didn't I send you our correspondence? Not the kind of letters that usually end in any kind of social relationship.

Again, my thanks, and best to you all.

Sincerely,

1212 Pine Street
New Orleans, Louisiana 70118
September 29, 1968

Dear Harold:

Your many letters came at the time Jeannie and I were in Florida moving our wonderful new dimension (the yacht "Atria") between the Miami River and Lake Ponchartrain. Atria is 32 feet long, sleeps four comfortably (or as many as you want in varying stages of discomfort) has a galley, a head, and a 45 hp gasoline auxiliary. But this hardly says anything about her. She's eight tons of steel and surprisingly fast for her weight, solid and unexcitable in the several storms we encountered at sea, and so reliable I wouldn't hesitate to go anywhere in her—ocean crossings included.

After two and a half weeks sailing her home, and several weekends to make the last few legs, I feel healthier and more vital than I've felt in years. Jeannie too. Setting sail is a real escape, and one we've needed for a long time.

In addition to ~~me~~ moving the boat we've moved ourselves. See new address above. The new place is much larger & I have an entire basement for my darkroom office complex. Come stay with us. Getting settled has been a real hassle, however. The darkroom is still in shambles and I've just gotten my office going (this is literally the first letter I've written since putting typewriter, files, etc together)

I'll try to respond to some of the matters of business in your letters.

About Sobel, there's not much I can say except—that's the way the ball bounces, Baby. Sobel's no longer in N.O. He lives in Washington, gets here occasionally for cases. Also it looks like AGLU here may be breaking up. A lot of the lawyers including Smith and Sobel have resigned. I know how you feel about Ben, but notwithstanding, He's one of the few guys that has kept AGLU radical—or at least kept it from being completely New Orleans fuddy duddy—and not ~~let~~ it may degenerate completely into a kidd of uptown social club.

As for photographs. My darkroom is not in order, but I'll be glad to undertake that special work you mentioned. I can use the darkroom of a friend. ^{Unless} reprints of the Sapruder material are of highest priority, I'd like to put that off until I can get my scene straightened out.

Regarding the King material. While I have absolutely no objection to your using any of it in your book, I feel strong obligations to protect the identities (and maybe even the lives) of some of my informants, especially the man who reported on the meeting. If I can get his permission for

publication and you can sufficiently disguise the event (I'm a little doubtful that this can be done) then I say full steam ahead. The material should certainly be published in a coherent form, not in the bits and pieces that have already appeared. As you are of course aware, the material I have does not really do more than throw a suspicious light on right wing participation, although I strongly suspect it is there. The police and the city are more thoroughly implicated. I haven't read the Esquire piece on King's assassination yet. Do they do anything with this material? And what in hell happened to the Ray trial?

O.K. Where do we go from here? Perhaps it would be easiest if you gave me a draft of what you want to use in the book. I'll go over it, make any necessary amendments and then get in touch with the people in Memphis.

I talked with Vince last night. It is a great comfort to know he is only as far away at the other end of a phone. When I get confused or downhearted (as I have been lately) talking to him helps a great deal to straighten things out. Vince is working on a history, going back before Sacco and Vanzetti to trace the development of this thing. He feels there is not much in the way of overt ACTION that can be undertaken now; We must watch, wait and learn, the time will come when there will be something to do. He even feels current events have outstripped the Assassination as a politically relevant activity. I must admit I tend to agree with him.

Odd though it seems, this understanding seems to have freed me from the grips of despair and inaction. I am going back to work to see what I can do to upset applecarts in my chosen field.

Let me hear from you, Harold, but please don't be upset if my communications are not as frequent as yours. The art of letters is not my forte.

Cordially,

