

5/13/72

Dear Matt,

Just returned from tiring trip, including interviews with five cons in two jails, and one head-to-head with Frank, who is worse than I'd thought, and I'd thought he was miserable, if exceedingly competent. If you find ridicule not offensive, that is a change! If you waste the time to take what he used you for in context, you might feel other than you say. I haven't time to go into it, for the work is stacked high and I have some 14 hours of taped interviews to transcribe, affidavits to prepare for court use, and the accumulated mail.

As I told you when you phoned me from Memphis, you did better than you thought. I'd like to have the balance of your notes. Frank used everything of yours that I did by redoing the interviews on his own and pretending they were original and then leaving out all that related to the crime, except where he could misuse ~~the~~ misrepresent. I'm sorry you didn't interview Jesse Jackson. I realize you couldn't interview everyone. There seems to be an SCLC policy of complete detachment. Bevel had agreed to appear on the show but didn't. I had written him first asking that we get together in advance of it, for which I did go there a day early. He did not respond, my letter was not returned.

Glad you seem to find F-U better. When you read it, I think you'll find the parenthetical comments fall into two species, one redundant. There were many in the original, which had to be and was severely cut. I am not opposed to them and do use them extensively. But everyone who has commented on the early part of the book, where the heaviest cutting was essential, found this objectionable. Especially reporters. I had an enormous amount on the fink writers, like Blair and Lurie, for I expected the complete work to be no more than an historical record. I think the book might have been cut more, but I wasn't about to take time and have no regrets, other things being more important to me.

If you are paranoid in your comment about the publisher, so is everyone else who has mentioned it, including those in publishing. He has committed repeated mail frauds without fear. I still await the last third of the "advance" and he has made spurious charges for "author's alterations", which in an astounding number of cases are non-existent, meaning no changes of any kind were made, and in most of the rest are the correction of type-setting, not ms., typos. He has to be confident he'll not be prosecuted. At first I was inclined to be a minority of one and attribute this to incompetence, or to doing the book on the cheap in the hope the subject would make it take off, or my success with WHITWASH, which did make the Dell edition a best-seller.

It is too late now, but if Frank is out there again, I hope you will find time to tape him. He was spoon-fed by the prosecution and the FBI in both Memphis and Washington and he does let helpful things drop. He is a real blabbermouth with a compulsion to self-justification. So, I am anxious to have every word for the use of the defense.

Rather than suspecting Langley, I suspect St. Edgar the Indispensable.

Thanks and best to you all.

Warmest,

May 4 72

PS. I found nothing offensive in your remarks on my work. Possibly the book is offensive, but I think he was fair to me.

Received Frame Up this morning, for which thank you very kindly. Thanks also for the many kind (and undeserved) words you lavished on my pitiful efforts in Memphis. I did just enough to make it all the more criminal to pull out when I did, whatever the extenuating circumstances. I haven't had time yet to read the book so I can't comment on its quality except to say that from the few passages I've skimmed, it may be your best book to date. Incidentally, I agree with your publisher on the parenthetical comments, I think they make your exposition much clearer. But then, you and I have always disagreed on the importance of good editorship. Paranoid thought dept: If the publishers have done so little to promote the book, as you say, and if they have blocked your effort at promotion, could this publication ~~xxxx~~ possibly be a Langly-inspired <sup>is it</sup> to shut you up by printing you and stuffing you in an obscure corner with few readers??? Onward!