

9/4/66

Dear Penn,

All that high livin' cuts down on the work, but I'm back in the swing again. My new project is nearing completion, in rough draft, and I've gotten copies of all of it into other hands and where it can be appraised for publishing interest. My poor wife, who is not a good traveller and who cannot tolerate noise, got all I'd left for her done, kept up with the shipping, and is pooped. She gets all the dirty work, and what little "fun" there is is mine. Actually, I do not regard either the subject or encounters with such strange creatures as Cohen as "fun". That's an awful dose, as you probably noticed in my lack of sleepiness. I meant to ask you, is it a custom in the Jones household to bring guests into the occupied bedroom or does your wife number among the unusual attributes required of the wife of a writer and editor a remarkable tolerance, especially to strangers and strange people? She's a wonderful gal, and how wonderfully straightforward! But I guess neither of you'd have made it were she otherwise.

You perhaps know more than I about another death of another former Ruby stripper. I haven't time to read the papers now, something I miss very much. My wife does it for me, bringing me up to date on events and clipping things she thinks will be or more than casual interest. It is not likely she'd have missed the item had it appeared in the local paper or the Washington Post. I learned of it Friday when I was at WTOP-TV in Washington to get squared away on a five-minute taping session tomorrow. Her married name is Wahl or Well. It happened in Omaha. Her husband is suspected and he is in a psycho. ward. They're saving the wire-service item. If you do not know of it let me know and after they give this to me I'll send it along.

Popkin is doing a book-has done it. The NY Review is to print it. Murray Kempton, to whom I sent a copy of my book special delivery, mailing it 6 p.m. right at the post office in Washington, the night of May 9, and who has not acknowledged it or all my many telephone calls whenever I've been in NY, has written the introduction. So the Popkin "review" has its meaning. The mercenaries among our "associates"! Popkin and his wife were interviewed by the London Evening Standard August 16. I found it delightful, and informative, as I hope the editor of the Standard finds the letter I wrote him - as I think you, eventually will also.

It could be quite helpful to me personally and, I believe, to the ultimate clean washing if you could keep me posted on developments as you hear of them. Viking appears to have stolen my work, a chapter of the coming book entitled "The Dubious Kennedy Inquest". I let them have it in confidence to help them defend themselves against the weaknesses of the Epstein book. I was then thinking of it as a magazine piece, but almost immediately decided to do a series, the antecedent of this book. I have correspondence on it, including the reflection of a number of other things. I'm confident that I learned by accident when they duplicated my work. They seem to have sold my work to Bantam, with the result of a printing of 265,000 instead of the 125,000 planned. I'll next see my work about the 20th. as an appendix in the Bantam edition. Needless to say, I'm not jumping for joy. I have written Viking. It is awful that this thing may get messed up in a literary

scandal. These are not the only cases. You know of others. To me, what the NY Review and Popkin did is worse than the plagiarism.

One item of the Standard piece that may tickle you: Their reporter, Peter Fairley, who interviewed ^{Popkin} me in Paris, quoted her as saying the most exciting thing of all those greatly stimulating events and occurrences that characterized his work for and on the book was his "discovery" of these "new FBI documents. I told the editor of the Standard if he thought he might feel the same exhilaration to be my guest, that the others were all uninvited!

Viking's "explanation" is that these documents were "released by the National Archives too late for inclusion in the Viking edition". (Publishers' Weekly, 8/29, p. 66). I guess I know a reason Epstein didn't show up that Sylvia didn't. By the way, if you heard anything more about our program, reaction to it or plans for it, please let me know.

If it involves no great hazard or consumption of time for you and you can look into it for me, without revelation of my purpose, I'd like to know what the normal practices of the Dallas police are with regard to arrests and especially arrests under their dangerous drug act, releases under it, when mug shots are and are not made, descriptions, fingerprints taken, etc. Because you are not a Lane or an Epstein or a Viking, I'll tell you why. Perhaps, without attracting too much attention, if you have the time, you can track it down for me. Loran Hall, in the company of William Seymour, was arrested on this charge on October 17, 1963. I'd like to know all I can about it as fast as I can - the circumstances of the arrest and release and the status of the case; why, when, where and by whom he was arrested; by whom bond, if any, was posted; whether there was a complaining witness; whether he has been brought to trial or trial scheduled or charges dropped (and if so, why) whether he was mugged and printed, etc. Do not get yourself all involved in a big operation on this. But if you can find out at headquarters or in court records without spending too much time or attracting unusual attention, it could be helpful. I have a minimum without this. It would just help, but I do not want that help to be at unusual cost to you.

When I was in Washington I phoned a number of additional correspondents to let them know that so far as I am concerned, you are the expert on the strange deaths. For your information, when the representative of a major publisher was speaking to me about two months ago about the possibility of his house picking WHITEWASH up he urged the addition of a chapter on this. I declined on the ground none of it was my own material.

The Manchester book clearly has the scandalous potential I have feared from the first. Some day I'll show you my correspondence with the Kennedy's, Harpers, etc. If you read the LOOK ad in the NYTimes, you know this will be the unofficial white-wash. I found the ad more informative than I suspect its authors intended. I understand Manchester has had a return of a nervous disorder. Look has yet to acknowledge receipt or honor my demand for the return of a lengthy analysis of the Knebel piece that I'll probably revise and use as a chapter, with some material I forgot in my haste and some revision. Neither Epstein nor Lane told the real Rowland story. I shall use it in a different context.

Back to work. I was damned glad to meet you. While I do not anticipate being in a position to accept your invitation, I do want to end hope that sometime in the future I can. Best regards to your charming and tolerant wife, whose candor I recall with pleasure and whose indulgence in the wee hours helped me unwind.

Sincerely,