

10/26/66

Dear LA.,

If the rest of Penn's trip is like the beginning, he's going to do very well and have a good time to boot. It started out with a fortunate error - he didn't know his plane would land in Baltimore rather than Washington. I got to Wash in time to do a few things and still not have to rush to the airport, one of which is 30 miles from town. Called a few friends and acquaintances for him (someone else, especially a "competitor", can always say things that come with poor grace from ourselves). A real nice young fellow on the biggest TV station in town who, with his sweet wife, are good friends, used Penn as his leadoff in the major local newscast last night and then picked up about 5 minutes more during the center of the program. Didn't have a chance to get the evening paper, but this morning's Post, the largest paper, has a two-column story, about a column in length, that Penn shares with a medical pimp who defends the report in the AMA Journal. All in all, very good.

We had a swell time Monday after he got here, then we were joined by Welsh, and we went to a French restaurant owned by a friend and had more good time. He gave me a couple of helpful pictures, one of which I will use in the new book if I can. If this happens again, I hope there is time to let me know earlier. With more time, I think I could have lined up a little more for him. I'll try and check the foreign papers through my agent, if Remparts doesn't get them. I have a notion that if they do they will not tell you unless it does them good to do so. One of my good friends in the British press was supposed to be there. Whether his paper carries a story or not (he can write it and they not use it) I wanted Penn to meet him for the future.

I had hoped the pr men would make an arrangement with the Phila radio station, WCAU, which has a clear channel and a vast audience (sold a lot of books for me and help with the subject). Indications are there was not enough time. So, I wrote them a letter about Penn yesterday (they, too, have become very good friends) and suggested that if it doesn't work out this trip they might be able to use Penn by phone. That program is four hours long, is taped and repeated for the next four hours, and the best tapes are repeated Saturdays after a little time has gone by. That program is Jack McKinney's Night Talk. Jack has come to know the subject well and is very decent.

We talked about having my agent try and place Penn's book in England and elsewhere in Europe. I think there might be a good chance in Italy also, for there were three publishers bidding on my book there and the agent has been in touch with all three. Possible he can interest one of the two who didn't go high enough in Penn's. Penn liked the idea, so I want you to know I wrote the agent yesterday. As soon as I hear from him I'll let you know. I gave Penn his name and address. I've gotten him somewhat interested in the subject. At WCAU, might not be a bad idea to send a copy of your book (and I'd like to suggest that when Penn appears he get the name of it in, whether or not Remparts does - and they do not) to Miss Sigiley Lakach (a very sweet little girl) who is one of Jack's producers and lines up most of his programs. Tell her I asked you to.

Things didn't work out as smoothly Monday as I'd hoped. I'd expected to come back for Lil and return to DC for supper with Penn if he was free. Marc Stone, the pr man, said his brother IF would join us for supper. IF is an old friend. I've known him for 30 years. He has a small but effective newsletter. Can't get him interested in the subject, though. Well, supper time came and IF couldn't, but it was too late then. Of all the people in this business, you two are the ones Lil wants to meet (plus Bill and Maggie)...By now Penn's had enough experience to know how he does when he does it, but he was very good on WTOP. Cronkite didn't use the tape last night.

Spent some time yesterday, Penn may be interested in knowing, getting ready for Liebel and to help the LA people who are very worried. The NYTimes carried a long story Sunday that I got when I couldn't meet Penn Monday. I first called them Monday and then yesterday wrote the president of UCLA a long letter about the subsidy they are giving a private commercial venture, Liebel's book, by assigning three teaching assistants, 20 students, etc., to it, showing it was not impartial scholarship, asking whether the parents had assented to their sons, whose tuition they were paying, becoming partisans in a dubious venture, whether they intended subsidizing Liebel,

and then going after Liebeler, politely but hard. I also ridiculed him. Why, I asked, does Liebeler pretend to be concerned about two named books only, Lane's and Epstein's, when the former doesn't name him and the latter says he's God? Why does he not "study" or mention the one book he knows of which says he did a bad job, and then I go into his letter to me alleging I said less than kind things of him (which I labelled an understatement) and his failure to respond to my challenge and my having given him the page number of every reference to him in WHITEWASH. I half-way defend Len, who did a very stupid and cowardly thing, saying that if Liebeler is so anxious to get into court on a slander charge, why doesn't he file one against me? To Liebeler's fake representation that what is needed now is something to give both sides I said that is what he got paid for doing when he was on the Commission, and he failed then. Why out the fox to guarding the chicken house? I wound up saying he was pretending to be the accused to escape his real position, that of the accused, and that in this country, whether UCLA thinks so or not, we do not put the judges robes on the defendant. I also challenged them to bring me out to address the UCLA student body and suggested that as an alternative, from the record I'd give them a weekly question to ask Liebeler to answer so people could understand just what he did and did not do as a member of the staff of the Commission. I used up all my copies, that's why I'm telling you and Penn. It is three single-spaced pages. I use the carbon paper after Bill gets most of the mileage out of it. I sent copies to Bill and Maggie, to my agent, to the NYTimes, etc. Maybe this will take the heat off. Penn said he'd call Mort Sehl on this. I think we can keep Liebeler busy in a way that Lane will not and possibly cannot, given the chance. Penn agrees that the way to begin is to needle the life out of him. If Bill can get any attention for this, I think I can pull it off. Now that I've got enough on Liebeler and with what he did on Specter I think the time is ready. And I've got the stuff on Liebeler, as you'll know when you see the new book. Penn was wonderful, offering to set it in type. But that will take a lot of time, because it is a lot of book, and will cost you people several thousand dollars. I have a first-refusal deal with a publisher. If he's not contracted by the time I'm ready, I'm going ahead. This will not wait.

Hope you can find some way to really push Penn's book now, for now is the time for it. The basis for its acceptability has been laid. I hope there is some way there can be a feedback from this Ramparts thing. Until recently people, too many people, believed the report. Now enough of them do not to make what Penn has to say both more acceptable and more important, and I sure hope he can find more ways of saying it more places. If Stone phone the British correspondents I can get him and they get interested, there can be some feedback. I also hope he calls the Italians I gave him, for this is getting real hot in Italy. If Penn gets a play in Italy, from my experience he'll soon be getting offers. That is when he'll really need an agent. The publisher who is going WHITEWASH would not even read it 19 months ago, even when pushed by his U S agent. Once he started reading about me, he got hot. Then he made such a poor offer that I laughed at him. He wound up giving a much better deal than the two who got in touch with me in excitement. His advance is four times what he offered. Either Italian publishers are more shrewd than most or my agent is better or both. If anything happens along this line before Penn gets back, my agent's name is Gordon Harbord. He is at 53 St. Martin's Lane, London WC 2. He has connections in most countries and has sold serialization to a Spanish newspaper, a German magazine and is dickering with German condensation rights. And he knows publishing people, some of whom are in his family.

Gotta get to work now. Hope I forgot nothing. We'll all get together some of these days.

Sincerely,