

Dear Dave,

2/3/90

Since telling you I would recount a few of my dear but deceased friend Sidney Kaufman's adventures I've been thinking about it and perhaps ought omit some of the names.

Like so many of my friends in New Deal days, particularly after war broke out in Europe, he stayed with us until he got situated. As with many others, I got ~~that~~ started through another dear friend, the motherly K.C. (Casey) Blackburn, who aside from being active in Democratic politics was first second in charge and then in charge of the Office of Government Reports. She'd been with the Creel thing in World War I and she was like a mother with young people.

Sidney liked women and women liked him. But I never knew him to run around when he was married. His first marriage was to the actress, Fran Heflin, sister of the actor Van and of another brother whose name - now don't recall, a sort of lobbyist. Fran was on Broadway in some show when I visited them, then I was not in touch with Sidney for a while, this probably after World War II, and then he told me he'd divorced her. When he was out of town she slept with others, he said. He remained close friend of the lobbyist brother.

One of the women who lived with him was the daughter of a former historian/ambassador to Germany. She had been quite open in telling him she'd slept with as many high Nazi officials as she could. She lived with him until the morning of the day she married a wealthy liberal somewhat older than she was. She got out of Sidney's bed to marry this man.

It happens that earlier Sidney and this man had known each other and the man had done something Sidney considered not nice to him, perhaps actionable, and as a prank Sidney told him he'd forget it if this liberal made a contribution to the Communist Party. I have no reason to believe Sidney was a Communist and am reasonably confident he was not. Alas, it may have been an unfortunate and costly prank because later that man was called before the House Un-Americans. My recollection is not clear on whether he and his wife fled before testifying or after it but flee they did, to behind the Iron Curtain. To the best of my knowledge they did not return. I'd be surprised if the man were still alive and the woman could have returned without causing any publicity.

Sidney was a very bright, very able man whose specialty was producing movies and later TV shows and who was a skilled photographer. He was in OSS, was an enlisted man in the Army and able enough to get himself an honorable discharge, during the war, to become a commissioned officer in the Navy. Last time we saw him as a Navy officer he'd driven to Washington from the Virginia capes with the enlisted man crew of a couple of more with whom he had been photographing embarcation for the invasion. Now the Navy hadn't bothered to order that historic event photographed so Sidney did it for the Navy, with his own camera and film. He and the men were a sorry mess, dirty, tired and hungry when they got to our apartment, then downtown, near the Capitol. They cleaned up, -il fed them and they left. When we were talking about this later, he laughed and told me he'd caught hell for doing for the Navy what it neglected to do for himself. The alleged reason was "security." I laughed when he told me that because I remember the odd thing he'd told me when he got to the apartment after that filming, that his major problem was taking footage that did not include the Good Humor ice cream vendors. Security! Hasn't changed a bit.

He knew everybody. He introduced me to the publisher who contracted Whitewash only to break the contract while drooling in the till, after his vice president made a trip to Washington. He then introduced me to Rocket Books which initially went for the book very big, predicting it would be the best-selling book of 1965. Only Boris Shimkin, who then owned it, while liking it much rejected it because "it would be the red flag under the charging bull" of the Department of Justice. One of his people, a man named Crossman, did a fraudulent book, "Calories Don't Count," and Shimkin did not want to be added to those already under indictment. (Rocket Books arranged for Sam Vaughn, Eisenhower's and Nixon's editor at Doubleday, to read the book, which they praised highly to him in my presence. They declined to do the book and were honest with me in giving me their

Our decision was not editorial and not easy to arrive at."

reasons. In writing me they said that perhaps if I'd gone farther afield they'd have been more interested. When I was in New York and phoned to ask what they meant - and they took my calls, including on a high level - they said they'd had a top-level conference on it before rejecting it for what amounts to fear. I have this precisely in the book file I compiled when I was ~~was~~ planning a book, "Dick Waring in the Hell Box, Or How to get Rich in Six Months." In newspaper printing shops near all the places types was replaced in the forms prior to printing were wooden boxes in which the discarded type was ~~then~~ thrown to be melted down and reused. An editor, cousin of a friend, read the manuscript after the publisher broke his contract - first publisher - saw - and she said that it was a fine book that would make me "rich in six months."

While I'm rambling, the second publisher to whom I was sent by another friend was Praeger. His friend was Mort Funer, director of special projects. He read the ms. overnight, predicted success for the book, thought Praeger would like it very much and make an initial print of 50,000 copies. Very large for those days. That was about the spring of 1965. Praeger, he told me, was in San ~~Francisco~~ Francisco but would return soon. It did not take long for Praeger to reject the book. his ~~reason~~ reason: I was not a recognized scholar with a lot of degrees and university connections. (I remind you he did Melanson's crap which is malodorous to the uninformed and stinks awfully to the informed.) It was not until much later that I learned that Praeger was a CIA publisher.

Sidney left Hollywood when as a young man he was on his way up. He was one of the then famous Walter Wanger's assistants. He found the place immoral and I'm sure he did not have sex in mind. Although he did tell me some stories about public sex out there with stars in the starring public roles. I think he was of independent means after that, though.

I don't know the field but I'd not heard of an American making films in India and Yugoslavia (both after World War II) until he told me of his experiences doing that. He even produced an anti-Klan film that was a big success in Louisiana and he was able to do this by giving the klan leaders a profitable connection, I believe mostly in business and perhaps with some roles.

During the long period I was often in New York trying to get the book published I stayed with him at Forest Hills and used his office, at 45 and Fifth Ave.

He knew everybody, everywhere. He did get me the agent in England later who placed whitewash with the late Giangiacomo Feltrinelli and with Frewin in London. I think I told you that Frewin, literally, was writing the contract when he was few bad information, I presume by or through the spooks. Fine man, Gordon "Harbord" ~~the agent~~.

Later I met Feltrinelli, through Ruggerio Orlando. I mentioned him, I think, in connection with the marvellous Italian-owned bookstore on Fifth Ave. Orlando, nephew of THE Orlando, represented the Italian LIFE and Italian TV, on which he had me often. Feltrinelli wanted me to write a "J'accus," but I then was not able to honestly address our government that way. By ~~that~~ the time I was he'd been killed in an explosion. But when I met him he'd rejected Barbara Carson's "Acabird." I talked him into publishing it and he did.

That night Orlando also introduced me to Bill Buckley at a party for a poet who wore only leather and drove only a motorcycle. At the Pierre. Buckley was his usual superior self. He looked down his nose and told me he'd not read my book. I didn't like his manner or his words and came back, without thinking, "That's obvious or you would not flaunt your ignorance about the subject as you have." and he didn't have a word to say. What he didn't remember or didn't know because he had Oscar Collier, who'd been Mark Lane's agent, putting together a staff for a private JFK assassination investigation he was to fund through the Kohlberg (China Lobby) Fund. He'd already asked me to be the chief investigator and Sylvia Meagher to be the editor. So, Buckley never invited me to do his show. (Later I met his nephew at Floyd's, Univ. Rd., where he gave bad checks and blew pot.) His father than senior, now a judge.

The thing reminds me of another and I ramble. Translated into Italian the book, hard-back and about 4 1/2 x 7 1/2 inches, without index, is titled, "Chi ha ucciso Kennedy?" I met his widow later in Washington at a book affair but she had no interest in the subject.

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