

5/24/72

Dear Walter,

Don't be concerned about the yellow color on the back of this paper. It is out-of-date paper for a special copying machine. Thousands of sheets were given to me. Using it saved buying paper, so I do.

Your letter of the 21st came today. On McMillan, you are right. Suing is a last and unusually impractical resort. However, you are far from that point. His book has yet to be turned in. Then it must be accepted and then it must be published. I doubt the publisher will consider publishing anything on the subject without a new and sensational development of some kind. However, McMillan has to turn something in to keep from being sued under his contract. It is unlikely that he would damage you seriously, but he could hurt your family. For the moment, all you can do is keep an accurate record. If and when his book is accepted, you might want to consider writing the publisher. Again, that is not right ahead.

You have eliminated some of the confusion. You did not identify the court-appointed lawyer or his firm in the state case. On the man whose identity you have kept to yourself, should you decide otherwise, that should not be difficult in a couple of weeks. You should be thinking whether or not you should when you can. It might be a kind of protection.

You represent the John and James attitude correctly, and the reason you believe they have in mind may be it, I don't know. But they have not been really helpful. On his own case, John was one thing, one James' another. But for the major purpose I had in seeing him, he was helpful, quite so, and I am confident also truthful. However, that was to get for the lawyers what they require for drafting affidavits, not the essence of the case, or the fact of it. There remains another possibility beside the so-called code of the underworld. James may feel that keeping his mouth closed is insurance. I disagree with him, but he might feel this way. I just don't have the answer and I just don't believe he is really serving his own personal, selfish interest.

Counterfeit money is but one of several tire possibilities. Hot stuff is another, bonds or money or travellers checks. Not an awful lot else suggests itself. What interests me more than what it was, with the possibilities limited, is whose it was.

I have not forgotten the McMillan letter. I haven't been to Washington since I wrote. And if you have anything to worry about from him, it is in the future. Right now he is in trouble and apparently staying drunk. I disapprove the kind of writing in which he is engaged, cheap commercialization and exploitation of those who can do nothing about it and what is worse, of those not even by the greatest indirection in any way involved. Carol Pepper's kids, for example. Or your's. He claims to have found an old-time bad-man, one Red Ray, a hanged killer. If it is true, what difference does it make? Anyway, in James' interest, I'll be interested in anything he is after or does that can further obscure the facts of the case.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg