

Dear Bill,

5/1/97

Thanks for the eplilogue with your letter of the 24th. As I'd feared, my Janice is temporarily tied up on some kind of civic/charitable thing until the end of next week, when she'll come for it.

This is the first typing on a new ribbon. Hardly got my fingers dirty in getting it on, they have been on the shelf that long. And my neaby office supply company is closing down. Means I'll have to be ~~going~~^{going} downtown and wonder if I can make it from where I can park to that store.

Glad you like the Beauty book. It is a bit different. Just got the re-typing of a long Helen chapter and one on Max Holland. I think I can now see that with thwt I should have soon, what I wrote on Riebling, those three can go together in a single manuscript. I'll think about that ~~when~~^{if} I see the Riebling.

Interesting stories about the baddies of the mob.

We hope the extra problem with the carpenter ants is solved. These are the breeding males and they look like and fly like wasps. They found a way of coming in where you'd expect the rain but we had to water. They found a flaw in the flashing of the chimney! I think it was four extra trips before the exterminator found that. Each had us away a half day. Can't breathe that stuff in.

At Hopkins day before yesterday, a hard day for Lil and me because of all the walking, I was first scared and then pleased. The cardiologist asked me to go to their speeded-up X-rays in that same building for a chest X-ray. When I brought it back he and the young doctor with him ^olooked at it and with big smiles said, "Beautiful!!" I asked what was beautiful and was told that they'd feared my chest had fluid in it again but the X-rays show it is clear. That

is beautiful!!! Celebrated with abo ut a cubic inch of fine Vermont sharp cheese yesterday and about two teaspoons of peanut butter today. Both nonos.

The King/Ray story seems to be that Stine made a deal with the King family. He and Pepper could not agree. Newday had a story reporting that Posner is now going to do a Ray book.

More catching up to do. Best to you both,

Handwritten signature

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Dear Harold:

Thanks for the Fletcher Prouty book. It is very good. I have just finished speed reading it. I continue to be amazed that I spent 10 years trying to buy one of your books, and now I get them for free! Even unpublished. I assure you, I really appreciate it.

On another subject, a story. About 20 years ago, how time flies!, my father went to Buffalo NY to meet with Delaware North, the operating company of the Buffalo mob. At one time they owned Miles Park Horse Track, next door to Whayne Supply. Part of the old State Fair property. They lost their dates because of politics, they also owned the old Latonia. We did not need another thoroughbred track; we have Churchill Downs. They also owned Jai Alai frontons in Florida, the old Boston Garden, various parking lot franchise around the country including here in Louisville, and the concession franchises at about 40% of the major league baseball parks in the country, including the Louisville Redbirds. Also implicated in the murder of a reporter in Arizona about 22 years ago. Car blew up! They are, in fact, the face of the modern Mafia. Plus, laborer union infiltration, questionable donations to Bruce Babbitt, and I think the right to run the concession at Yosemite. Plus other stuff.

Run by the Jacobs family, they have their operating units send the receipts of their operations to Buffalo -every night of the year. What you might call a cash flow business!

So, dad and the company bought the race track for our expansion, and since we have built a truck shop on it, plus a 2 acre parts warehouse. We got it for a slightly reduced price because of a mysterious fire! For which their insurance company paid.

Anyway, one of the Jacobs asked dad if he knew anything about art. He said no, but that he recognized they had some fine art on the walls. Jacobs said, "About \$ million worth! They said some were by LeRoy Neiman. They said, "WE OWN HIM!"

Well, I took all of this with a grain of salt until I read an article about Neiman in Barron's the financial paper.

Neiman paints these sort of impressionistic paintings with splashes of color. Nice, but he ain't no Picasso. Markets his prints through Playboy. Among others. Here's the catch. Through art galleries, or private agents, he sells his original paintings for as much as \$250,000. Then, he sells a number of prints, like 1,000, and then some posters sometimes. Nice profit.

The numbered prints go for maybe \$500. Times 1,000, that's half a million. But here is the catch.

Knowledgeable buyers, or even casual observers of the art world like me, know that no Neiman painting is worth \$100,000. What invariably happens, they get some rich but unsophisticated person to pay maybe \$250,000 for an original. Then, perhaps 7 years later, the yuppie couple get into a little money trouble, and then go to an art gallery and try to sell it. Thinking maybe they will make \$50,000 profit. "Art as an investment."

The gallery owner says, well we think we can put it on the wall for \$8,000. The owner gets mad, and says "You don't understand, this is an original LeRoy Neiman, not a print. We paid \$250,000 for it. The gallery owner says, look pal, I'm trying to tell you the truth, we can get the book out and show you Neiman's all day long you can buy oXXX for less than \$10,000.

The owner gets PO'd, but finds the same story all over New York or Miami. HE finally figures he has paid \$250,000 for something worth less than \$10,000.

Nice markup.

This is the face of the modern Mafia as it relates to the art world. He designed the Derby poster this year!

I don't think anything has ever scared dad like dealing with the Delaware North. They even asked if the company needed some silent partners! But dad said they didn't!

By the way, they also offered to sell him some Jai Alai frontons, which are not as popular as they used to be. The one in Daytona has been torn down to make a bookstore. How times change.

But a Textron exec did buy one. He apparently had some disagreement with the former owners. He was killed in a pro hit in the parking lot of his country club. No arrests were ever made. I told dad, "Guess it was a good idea not to invest in Jai Alai, huh?" I think he kind of shuddered.

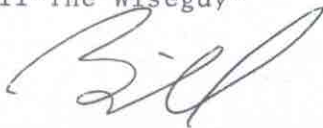
So, that is my Mafia story. Old man Jacobs was nicknamed the "Godfather of Concessions." Is there any business more profitable than selling draft beer or Cokes?"

Not even the illegal or even legal drug business is that profitable.

Well, my back is better. Even won a case the other day.

Say HI to Lil!

Bill "The Wiseguy"



*Hope this enclosed
is what you need.*