

Dear Jim,

Visit of Les Paine, Newsday

12/19/75

As I told you a few minutes ago, the meeting went very well. Once he got here. He sure is a city boy. First he gets a defective rental car, then takes the wrong exit and turns the wrong way, and then, in a way and direction I did not ask, enjoyed what he described as a beautiful hour in the mountains.

I decided to be fairly open and pretty fully informative, drawing distinctions on what had to be kept confidential and why where it seemed to be necessary for his comprehension. This ranged from the actualities of the defense situation to details of the crime and of the charges and the coercion. I also informed him of the coming Times series so his people would know and not be caught. He knew about CBS.

He can be helpful and I think he will be. These are areas into which I did not believe it necessary to discuss by phone. He will, he says, deliver Jesse Jackson and Earl Caldwell, the only ones I asked, for unrehearsed interviewing. In return, without being asked but as an evidence of good faith, I told him that if either was not content I'd give either or both the tapes. I told him why I didn't want to tell him what I wanted to go into and explained why I never prepare for or structure these kinds of interviews. I think it helped him understand why all our stuff holds up. I told him that my purposes were preparation for the trial and that I believe we'll have one.

In fact, I offered him a package for Newsday, my material not covered by the restrictive order, showed him enough, and he is sold. He will try to sell Newsday. If he does there will be a series, it will be syndicated, and he'll write it.

He has been doing investigative reporting for two years, so I was gratified that he was as impressed as he showed with what I let him go over. I went further and said that subject to your approval, if they want to come together with me on this they can join the suit and be co-complainant. I explained what more there has to be, the deficiencies in what I was provided, what was withheld for sure, what was probably withheld. He thought what he saw was enough, if they'd approve. I said I'm certain I'll get more.

He recognizes the distinction I have to make between my obligations to Ray and what I do on my own, whether or not at some point he can help Ray.

Based on recent experiences I did not offer him all this work free. I offered a deal for syndication and told him that two others are, in fact, interested in the material. These management types understand money better than news sometimes. There was other discussion of what is possible but I need not take time for it now. We've gotten nowhere with other approaches. Maybe they'll comprehend a more usual one better. I think he is anxious to go ahead.

I told him I'd wait until January 3 for word from ^mo on the Invaders possibility and if there was no Times assurance by then I'd consider my obligation to ^mo met. Of course I'd discuss this with ^mo first. He can do what the rest of us can't on it because he is black. For the same reason he can be entree for us among blacks who have not turned on. He had asked me about one part of the Atlanta report. I was frank. He is sending me a copy when he gets back and xeroxes it.

We see eye-to-eye on Gregory, who is his friend, save that his view is harsher. He thinks what I do not, that Gregory is using this to promote contracts for appearances.

I did tell him of the Eastland situation, of which you'll know by the time you read this. He understands the import.

I told him bluntly (not unpleasantly) that if black, belatedly, want to do something about the King assassination there is no beginning other than the trial and defense of Ray. He agrees. This means black participation. He sees it.

Jackson was part of the advance party. King had stayed at the Lorraine before. Jackson knew 4/1. The Atlanta investigation included much on Nyles, including that he is a map of means, real estate, etc.

What I think is in question is not his interest or desire but Newsday's OK. He'll turn in a memo early in the week. He returns tomorrow. Next time he comes he'll bring his wife. He plans it. We invited. I'll probably think of more when we talk.

Best,