

Mr. Jim McKinley
7309 NW Maple Lane
Kansas City, Mo. 64151

2/23/76

Dear Jim,

You may or may not be aware of the sympathy I feel for the position in which you have been and are - and will be again. I gather that your silence when I got the message you would phone me last weekend and didn't express pique as well as pre-occupation. I'm sorry.

I'm sorry also that you seem unaware of the position in which this has me, although there are parts where I do not think it is likely.

If you had nothing else to do what Playboy asked of you is far too much. There is nobody there with whom I've spoken to whom I have not made this clear.

In time you will look back on this, as I have so often in the past, with many regrets. My own include your not heeding my urging that you send me uncorrected carbons as rapidly as you could so I could anticipate your problems before they got out of your hands and that you did not see fit, knowing Playboy had hired me as a consultant to use me and to discuss with me what you planned or had been told to write. In making the suggestion to you once I knew about the first piece, please remember that I asked nothing of you in return.

If you had ever told me what the second piece would really be - and neither you nor anyone at Playboy did and the account I got from them is quite different than the copy I read - I could have saved you so much work and you could have done a really memorable piece. If you are ever here I'll show you chapter and verse. If you had spent a day, perhaps less, here with Ann to do the copying, you could really have done a definitive job of the kind you undertook, not what I expected and had been led to believe you would do. I have files on all those characters. And the agonies all of you ~~would have been spared!~~

In time you will come to understand that while meeting my obligation to Playboy simultaneously I looked out for your interest. I'm not going to argue it now. You may or may not, when your intense pressure is over, want to ask yourself about the reversal.

I, too stay busy, despite a serious health problem. When I got copy, a call, I dropped everything. And I did spend much time. I learned five weeks ago that there was at least ~~my~~ negligence in my prepaid health care, that there were probably vascular complications (since confirmed) and week before last I learned for the first time that the main vein in my left leg is gone. Permanently. I have been doing my own writing, have three cases active in courts right now and despite these personal worries and considerations ~~and~~ I really did let everything go and try to be as helpful as possible. I think Chris will tell you that I distinguished between fact and belief and in every case supported every comment and suggestion. Nothing interfered with my meeting my obligations. If you do not believe I tried to do this diligently, meticulously and as constructively as possible under circumstances that were not easy for me I'm truly sorry.

More because you know the battle I went through for you after the evidentiary hearing.

As I told you before I say again, in writing or rewriting the King piece you will be well advised to try and anticipate what can eventuate in the coming months, especially during the long time spread between completion and appearance. It is by no means limited to whatever the 6th circuit decides. If I do not know what will happen I do know what can. And what I have learned since the evidentiary hearing.

This all has troubled me. That is why I write when I've laid my own writing aside for the day, while waiting for my wife to give me bills for the books I'll now package for mailing tomorrow.

Sincerely,