

2/20/74

Dear Dave,

I was in Washington Saturday and tried to reach you through your answering service which turns out to be a non-answering service on Saturdays. My reason was that the Hollywood people with interest in the King assassination had phoned Fensterwald in his absence and left a message "beginning with a quarter of a million." The offer was to him, Jerry Ray and me. He can't have anything to do with it for ethical reasons and Jerry Ray has nothing to do with it for any reasons, unless they want to use his name, and the literary property is all mine, anyway. So, because I was getting together with Bud on how to handle the next moves in the Ray case, I had hoped you could be there.

This updates you for when you get back.

However, it is not the reason for this letter.

You will remember I made reference to a number of other properties I believe to be quite promising, especially for movies. We have never had a chance to talk about them.

One is one of the most beautiful love stories of all time, with everything. I'm not going to take the edge off by giving you any details and besides, I have turned it over to a friend who I think is ideally suited to write it and I will not tell someone else's story. I'll give you only a few clues and tell you where it is because now is the time for you to get interested and you may hear from this friend, on my suggestion.

It is an interracial love story starting with the first bombing of Budapest in World War II, the true story of two fine human beings, everyday folks who are my firm friends, a then young black soldier from the town near which we now both live and the refugee waif whose life he saved. and what followed.

My opinion of the story is such that rather than try to do it myself when I consider myself not suited to the kind of writing it is worth I decided that what making the maximum of what could be a movie smash required two things of the writer, over and above professional skills: being a woman and being black. I felt the writer had to have life experiences to emphasize with both central characters. Rosa Guy, then president of the Harlem Writers' Guild, is the friend I thought and think ideally suited because besides being a fine writer she is both black and a woman. (And in all ways beautiful.)

So, I interviewed the woman of the story in depth and on tape, five hours of it and sent the tapes to New York. After Rosa heard them she came here with a mutual friend, a Pantam editor, and met the hero and heroine of the story and did her own interviewing. She returned to New York and when she could clean up enough of the work she had contracted, did a sample chapter and an outline, as I recall. Weis, who was then in financial trouble, offered a \$20,000 advance but for some reason it was not accepted, I think in part because Rosa had other contracts and in part to await until an initial movie approach could be made. Anyway, here is where it is as of 6 a.m. today:

Rosa has just phoned me to tell me that she is getting out from other her other obligations and will be returning to this work. She knows the hours I keep and she knows the emotional involvement I'm now explaining to you (but the p.r. man in you will really flip over that) of the heroine and her great longing for the story to be told. So I will now phone my friend/heroine with the word she has been waiting for.

Best regards,