

3/10/72

Dear Jerry,

I hate to take time for this but I must. And I ask that it be confidential, between the two of us only. I think the reasons will become clear.

From the time I got your letter with the statement that the Times had asked to be able to send its own pathologist in I have been both fascinated and worried. The fascination comes from the fact that although I can't be sure, I am of the belief that the idea did not originate with either the Times or Marshall. I knew this before Lattimer was ~~asked~~ permitted in, the week he was okayed and two days before he went to the archives. It is one of many things that made me so damned mad when you just refused to stop trying to pump me over the phone and then continued with Howard. You must learn about such things that there may be things you do not know and if you know may not fully understand. This kind of thing, let me tell you, has forced me to stop informing people I have told as much as I could for years, and I may yet withdraw entirely into myself. I haven't time to cope with kid notions and I can't assume greater work or emotional loads.

However, your version was in essence the fact, and the variations in it could have come from several things, one an entirely different source, the other the number of hands through which it passed. If you recall what I wrote you on this, you can in retrospect perhaps understand I was hoping you'd come up with more. I realized you had a confidential source. I didn't think it was tap-management of the Times, where something like this would have to be cleared, and I didn't think it would be on intermediate levels, and I was reasonable certain it was none of my three sources, none of which is accessible to you. So, as I think you can understand, this helped limit it for me. And I think you can understand that I was glad you called last night.

If you think back over our conversation, I have you one opening, if my hunch is correct, that you didn't take. I did not connect it with this, but I gave you the opportunity to say one of a variety of things. That you didn't say any of them means something to me. I am aware that this can be an error, but I don't think it is. I think for example, that you might have said you hadn't seen that person for a while, hadn't heard from him, etc. I know he gets to NYC regularly, I know he has connections with Yale, and one of the conditions of our relationship was that he do absolutely nothing at Yale. Do you realize now that this, in a different way, is what I was referring to in my letter to Duke?

I have had to learn much about Ned. In part this is because of the pain he caused us, the great amount of work and time he wasted, and in part because I am much more naive in many areas than those who know me through my work realize. I am too trusting. There is almost nobody I won't begin by trusting. I took Ned first of all on Gary's word, then because "I and I both liked him. What I didn't realize until too late is something you probably do not know, and that is that he has deep emotional and ego problems, the probable origin of which are quite decent. But it drives him to the incredible. You have seen but a small sample. You have not had the super-arrogant display of ego I had here the night he blew, and that only because he had come to realize and had had to face what he was really up to, what was bugging him, and that he is not all he thinks he is on this subject.

The break between us, when it finally couldn't be avoided, came over exactly what I have long believed he would do, which is one of the reasons I have been insisting that he give me written assurance that he had not and would not break his commitment to me. That he has failed to respond to this in any way is not normal for an honest man, and I do think it is his intent to be honest. I think it is possible he has done this in more than one way, the one you can't talk about being only the more recent. The initial condition and one of the few I imposed it that he would in no area do anything with anything related to the content of this book without my express approval, and that he would talk to nobody. He asked and got my approval for one man, with the understanding that if he could attract the interest for which he hoped, he could then go to a second. That is 100%, and that was to be in confidence.

I know the people he told me he wanted to talk to. A Yale law professor whose name I have forgotten is one (I'm limiting myself to what is most relevant, there were those not at Yale), Marshall is another, and then Katzenbach. That he would even dream of Katzenbach after what he had read in PI shook me, for K really stuck the shiv in Bobby's back. That is about the kindest thing you can say of his government career. It is he and not Bobby who was in charge of Justice-Commission relations on the policy level. Ned knew this. Am I giving you a reading on his sense? Before he really, and then inadvertently, disclosed himself, he actually went to Teddy's office under false colors, which may have made it more difficult for me to establish any kind of relationship there. He pretended to be friend when he is enemy. He is really off on a get-Kennedy kick. I don't know how much of this he realizes himself, but it was one of the issues between us. It floored him when I said, simply, take that chapter out. He misread me into a Kennedy fan. Even that did not satisfy him.

I'm going into this in an effort to give you an understanding you can't reasonably be expected to have. One is his psychiatric problems and needs, and a need is to do something for a reason other than the inheritance of great wealth (like all the other rich people I've known, he is niggardly and afraid of being had). Right now his self-respect and less-decent motive drive him to want to do something to me. He may, again, not realize this. Aside from his problems, it would be unlike him. But if you had seen his face and heard his words about 3 a.m. one morning when I had spent a long night listening to everything he had to say and one by one taking each apart, in no one case leaving him with any kind of tenable position, and then he came to realize it, you'd have a glimpse. His reaction was to me strange, an almost hysterical and completely disbelieving "I've NEVER been so put-down in my life." These are exact words. They struck me as a strange reaction by a partner to a planned collaboration, that working things out and coming to an understanding is a put-down. This is one expression of the hidden ego-involvement.

I'm not going into all the other things, and there are more. One, for example, is the ultimate effect on what so many of us have put so much into. I don't think most are in a position to understand this. Among those who can, Sylvia's brilliance will not be enough to completely (if at all) overcome what she conceives as a purist approach. So, you are alone and inadequately prepared to evaluate this. But it should be enough for me to tell you that a Republican didn't wait to hear the whole story. The beginning was enough for him. Like most intelligent politicians who get up, he knows the realities of political life. He immediately saw and articulated two things, one of which is the hurt this would do to our work, with which he has from the first been so sympathetic that in 1965 he tried to interest me, took a number of politicians in the subject on my work, his brother-in-law tried to get me an agent, he sat up all night after major surgery reading the ms of WILLIAMSON, and he even tried to get the Judiciary Committee, of which he was a member, to get interested. Credentials enough for being on our side? This is long, long before you, Ned and others had any awareness. He can't figure in it openly now for the same reason others with sympathy can't. He is the one who spoke to Marshall. The danger is real, whether you or Sylvia or Cyril or Ned or any others see it, and there is no countervailing benefit that can be expected with reasonableness.

There is one other aspect of this that appears not to have suggested itself to you, and that is, what his unrecognized motive is to "get" me or not, what it will do to Will and me and the simply enormous amount of work, time and money we have in the book he now wants to kill. This is the one way he can do it, if he succeeds, as he may already have. I want you to be under no illusions about what, if this happens, I may be willing to do. I have been living in public silence and bankruptcy for too many years tolerating such things. The effect is the same whether it is of Mark's cheap motivation, Palamondo's commercial ones, or those to to Ned may appear noble. I can't and don't ask you to break any confidence, but I hope you will be alert to what may be necessary for both our personal interests and the overall of the work and what can happen to it. If it turns out that in the end I am right and there is something you might have done and didn't, you also may face a few internal problems.

I don't think anyone, least of all you, has the slightest idea of what an appreciable part of my time has been wasted in preventing what is worse than what happened. You'll never know what I went through with Garrison, for example. There was a different approach, Sylvia's. She felt good fulminating against him, but it did absolutely no good at all, had no possibility of it, except to make her feel better, and it made the problem of coping with him more difficult. I did prevent what is much worse than anything he did do, and all that is good in the record he made is my work. In court in DC and in his own record of the trial in H.O. I consider this did us more good than cursing him and giving money to his enemies.

My record on anticipating these kinds of things is fairly good and I have been able to contend with a fair proportion of them. I don't think any critic can say this much. It has to be done with some effort and cost, by somebody, and in these things I have done not one single critic helped in any way, except Gary by encouragement when he discovered it on his own on his first trip to H.O.

I have to get to other things, and I'm expecting someone. There is one other thing I will address, briefly, for I've said most of what there is to say before. I didn't read your revised Times thing. ^{immediate} The reason then is that I wanted to complete the Epilogue and editing it, as I now have, and your letter did not solicit further criticism. The other reason is, as I told you to begin with, I take this personally and will continue to and I not only will not argue about it but would consider that demeaning. Something has happened to you, and it is not your understanding, for that you made clear immediately. I don't want to know what changes, if any, you made. You have to say what at the time you say it seems honest to you. But you also have to stand on it. I wanted you of the kind of thing I have had to face in the past, where things said by alleged friends were quoted directly with omission, to my considerable hurt. If this happens, be prepared. I go further and I tell you that in my opinion your original handling was not based on any assessment of the ~~record~~ record. In my view it was deliberately unkind (which is not to say that you deliberately intended this) and dishonest. I will have nothing further to say on this, but for too long I have hoped I could find fewer friends and more enemies, for the most meaningful help I ever get is from enemies, few of whom have ever really done any great hurt. The kinds of things the Marks and Epsteins have done openly and a few others not openly have been real hurts. I don't know what brought about your 100% turn around, to the point where I felt you were straining with yourself to reduce the potential harm to where you had it in that version. I do have a few ideas. But there was no change in the fact available to you, nor any in your understanding. The change was in what you said, and I think you should be doing some thinking about what brought this to pass. I have had all of this I propose to accept. And more than I will ever again without some kind of response have had suffer. You handled this differently than you did anything else, you omitted earlier history that you did not omit in other cases, and you should be seeking an understanding of why.

Perhaps some of the letters I sent you disclose it. If not, many others I can show you will reveal that I have from the first expected what I am now satisfied is probable from you. One reason I have been able to develop as much as I have is that I do analyze as others do not take the time to or can't escape their emotions long enough to. And I had to be prepared to cope with it. As you should know, I started that before he had time to do anything at all. There is much neither you nor he understand about Marshall. I hope the ultimate learning is not too painful for both of you.

Anyway, thanks for calling, good luck with your piece, and I think your judgment in going for Marshall now is the correct one and that you haven't begun to realize the problems you would have with the other publications you mentioned.

Best,