

5/24/71

Dear Js,

Wish I'd had a chance to write you a couple of days sooner. As my crossed letter shows, I'd feared you might feel compelled to answer when you didn't have time. However, I also confess I'm glad, for some of the enclosures are quite valuable and the others are just plain valuable.

You are correct in assuming that I did not know of the Atlanta postmark. It has a number of significances, and I can't yet decide which. Although, as you will see, I had and cast doubt on the identity of the driver, this could be corroboration of his statement to me that he was. However, and particularly in view of the fact that he didn't tell me of this knowing I had doubted he was, it can also be taken as an indication that it had been mailed by someone with access to his possession and mailed to make it seem that he was there. This is exceptionally honest in its statement of doubts for AP. As you will also see, Gavzer did what I regard as first-rate work and so credit him. I regard ~~that~~ as significant because his career of JFK-assassination writing is from a bordello.

The three stories on Ray's attempted break help because they add to the existing discrepancies of the official accounting of that, that is, in taking credit for the discovery, who actually discovered, etc. Some indicate a possible buildup in officialdom for the new warden. Jimmie had been quite diffident in writing of it. Said it was of no importance and then, in a way that might have passed undetected through a hasty reading, said what I interpret to mean exactly the opposite. The new commissioner of corrections went out of his way to say his new warden is the hero, which I very much doubt, but which may help make it possible for a tough warden to get away with being tougher.

I did not have the NYTimes 4/2/69 story on Hanes (and how I wish I had access to a list of his and Hueie's appearances). It is significant to me in a way it might not be to you. Under oath, in a deposition in Ray's civil suit, he did everything but say that "Hueie rewrote his Look piece. It seems that Hueie paid them, not Look. At least, if not that, acted as Look's agent, but I think the former. Hueie protested he was not an editor of Look, which is at least an evasion. And it indicates that Hanes, as soon as the piece was out and when appearing under Look's auspices, took issue with what appeared under his name. (I think I have the answer to a question you will find in the book, what Hanes got to give up his contractual rights, but I won't tell you until after you've read it. Remind me.)

The 3/15/69 Times piece on the CA decision is fascinating and may also be of legal significance, as I'll let the lawyers know. The part that intrigues me is that on which you do not comment, the abdicated lawyer and the alleged associates of the accused. The parallels ought be obvious. It fortifies my hunch.

Hal has not been able to reach Mason. He said he'd try through Harv. His phone was to be connected this week. I presume the partial transcript if of his personal comments. There is no real mystery of the arrests, although there seems to be. What causes this is official dishonesty and greed for "credit". But I played it the same way, only in more detail, because the question is reasonable and viable and should not exist. This makes his silence less comprehensible. Dunbar you are right. Spain has been an exception with me, but I did reach his producer (who is also Dunbar's) and no call-back. Long ago, too.

UPI Joesten story is something I'll take to DC next time and ask UPI if one has to go out of the seat of government to get a legit story on the wire if it does not favor the govt. When they give Joesten attention, who hasn't earned credibility?

Your Mardi Gras opinions confirm my own fears. It would have to be handled with an undeviating lightness of approach and style that are foreign to me, too. Yet at some

point something like this will have to be done or we'll never have credibility again. Garrison has just taped a Merv Griffin show, and I shudder to think of it. I'll also not be looking at it, for I'll be working or asleep. I've written about 15,000-20,000 words of AGENT OSWALD, two long chapters than can be broken down as a submission. The second is not complete, the first retyped. I'd not be riting this now but after so long a period of late bedding and early rising I just had to lay down this p.m. and there isn't enough time before supper to pick it up again. Not intended as unflattering!

When I trod your native turf so long ago, the aged lawyer with whom I went carried the one weapon we had between us, a very small pocket knife. So, we avoided the Briahs. If they grow as those we found on moving here, wow. I've had them 50 feet long and ruining beautiful trees. As by now you know, I'd written Hal about a column he downgraded on the bird, suggesting it not be downgraded and method of gursuing further.

Don't knock yourself out getting the Dorman book, and if it intrudes into the limited time you have for reading, skip it. But I would value your opinions and what you see just might trigger some recollections. To this point we are on complete agreements on possibilities.

Encouraging to know the mail has improved, especially letters mailed from elsewhere. Now that lil is not working and I'm not taking her in town in the a.m., I do not get the mail at the p.o. and I do not save the outgoing mail for then. We have none until 9 p.m., and I drive into town to make the first of the night's departures, which helps speed it by a day. If I mail it in the a.m., unless I've written very early, the latest enclosure will be of the day before. Tomorrow I have to go into town and will send anything ready then and, unless there is something urgent, will not go into town again. I'll be away the last part of the week, with a fool for a client.

On the electronics I've already taken your unanticipated advice, there being no real Sony dealer here, only jewelry stores that can order from them. I've ordered their special plugs, having profited from your earlier advice, and will then take all to the local shop. Input and output on the Concord take the standard earphone-size plug, and I have enough extra earphones to supply them.

On F-U, now that you have read the first three or four chapters, I ask a general questions: is there anythin you found jarring in them and if so what. The editing there was extensive. I have my own theory which I do not give you, thus you'll not feed back.

Ky God! your subway construction is interminable. It was a problem the night I feel ~~allege~~ before you got home. And that was 2½ years ago. Elder sold to Brentanos owing me money I'll now never get. Each time I was there I spoke to the bookkeeper and each time I was asked for and sent papers.

Kutner was here, did almost an hour instead of the planned ½, which means it will not be in the planed slot. I have always found it strange that to now only Bill O'Connell in LA ever had any interest in me. I did approach RAI in the past. Negative. I think this is now changed... Dellums' silence on the book puzzles. He has been getting excellent press and exceptional DC TV attention... Kerry's magnificent appearance was also done in full by the educational net, which is also cool to me. The Washington station refused to air anything on F-U, and previously the American Univ station, their then local outlet, had. Intellectuals! I expect to see more of Kutner. The reason he came here (I approached him when he was in NY during the negve) is because he is spending most of his time in DC. They have a two-"man" staff, the other a Margo Adler who did (which may mean no more than reading) news in NY. She and others there had read the book. K hadn't at time on interview.

Your suggestions re publisher are not new, everybody else being pretty explicit in expressing the same opinion. There is a basis for it nobody knows. I tend to believe it is the melding of incompetence, arrogance, ego on the part of the one who is supposed to handle such things, plus their lack of cash. I have not yet gotten the second part of the "advance", although when I press for instalments to meet immediate emergencies, I eventually get them. The most suspicious thing of all is their first printing of much less than required to meet the cost of the advance. That was really crazy if in ocent, for the going-back-to-press cost is great. And suppose they have to pay me the advance anyway? I really do not know the answer. As I put it to them, if they had sold out after contracting, could they have performed differently? Their stupidities are such that I can take the book away from them at any time, I am confident. But no purpose would be served, since there is nothing I could do with it. The contract does call for me to get the negatives and plates and first crack at the remainders. So, at the rathe they are going, this may happen anyway and I ll have paid for them with the unpaid "advance". Then, if there is a break, the book will be mine. I think I reflect my expectations on further promos, not one of which they arranged and some of which they opposed, in resuming writing and on a different subject. (Boy! could I use an editor-in-residence to edit the rough before Lil retypes and to cool me a bit. So far in this it is moderate, perhaps because I've never been as weary in my life. And the stuff itself is that hot. I think this can make a great book. I fear another enormity, I have that much. And it will be another non-fiction detective story. What, despite the depressing effect on sales, assuming publication, I'd like to do is have in a vast appendix every single FBI report I quote, every one of Hoover's letters, each of the staff memos, etc. And when I submit these two "chapters" every doc will accompany. Today, thanks to Media, there should be a market for anything with the FBI letterhead. But, were this to be done, the docs alone would be longer than F-U. And in doing the initial writing, not knowing what, if any, market there will be, I have to do it completely, as I see it, to make the full, historical record. Then, if there is commercial interest, the cutting would be the big job, and as I generally do these things, it can be done by hunks rather than sentences.)

To conclude, I have an executive editor interested but he can't get the decision-maker to believe the subject is not dead, including commercially. I'm having to be my own agent, which is not good. Nor is it good that these chapters will not be as brief as they could be, but I can't keep rewriting, so I'm taking the chance that there will be enough interest to read, perhaps stimulated by all the accompanying official documents, some marked "TOP SECRET" and none stolen.

Lil is late calling me to supper. Best to you both, and please don't feel pressed to answer, ever. Nobody ought ever keep the hours I do, and there is no other way for you to keep up, so don't try. I don't expect it.

Best regards,

21 May 1971

Dear Harold:

This will have to be a slapdash attempt to answer a number of letters from you which have accumulated during a period when we simply could not find enough time all at once to answer them properly. I shall go through them hurriedly and try to deal with the points that seem most to concern you and/or which I can offer any intelligent opinion about.

In a letter dated April 27 you mention a possible book about the Mardi Gras approach etc. It goes without saying that you have unlimited material for such a book and no doubt could develop it into a blockbuster. Certainly you are justified in doing so. But I still wonder a) how much real good it would accomplish in view of the limited understanding the public has of these things, and b) how much it might be misinterpreted by interested parties. My honest suggestion would be to proceed very carefully indeed with such a project. I have serious doubts about how it would actually work, or be made to work.

Enclosed are copies of several old clippings on your avian friend and related matters which might have some morsels of interest, possibly even of illumination. We most distinctly had the feeling that his recent adventure was not altogether his own idea. My mother's family came from that terrain (my maternal grandmother, then a young schoolteacher, was a Confederate courier and carried messages between rebel generals across the river in the slat of her sunbonnet) and I can recall horrendous stories from distant cousins about the roughness of the country, with great emphasis on some devilish vegetation known as a bamboo "briah" which apparently was guaranteed to make certain that nobody went anywhere off the beaten path, especially at night. I trust that in your excursions with your elderly ~~friend~~ friend long ago that you escaped the horrible fate so vividly described by my long-dead cousins about the lethal effects of these brambles. Anyway, I know what you're talking about, and could not agree more. No real incentive. He was conned.

As to your theory about the attorney and his organized connections, we have no knowledge of our own on this angle but see nothing whatever inconsistent in your theory. In fact a man of his long experience could scarcely have avoided at least peripheral contact in some way, possibly many times, and there is always the chance that somebody got something on him along the way and put him in a position where if they said jump he jumped. This is not to downgrade your thinking in any way. Quite the contrary. I'm merely bulwarking your feeling that this is completely out of character. It could even be that he didn't know a contract was involved when he took the case, then found out too late to back out. See the clipping dated 15mar69.

Before I forget it, I want to mention that your letters have been arriving promptly, even those with ordinary postage taking only two or at most three days. And one dated as airmailed at 5pm in Washington on May 11 actually arrived here the next day, delivered at the house, before noon. From a postoffice that otherwise is breaking down in almost every respect you can name, that's real service.

Also before I forget it, in trying to adapt different brands of electronic equipment ~~gunk~~ together, I have found that the only way, really, to get it done is to take both pieces in to a dealer or shop and say simply, sell me a patch cord or plug that will enable me to use this mike with that machine. If they can see them, they can do something about it. If they can't, there is no way to tell them precisely what is involved. Our dealer here, for instance, could function from the Sony end of the problem, but would have no way short of looking up an actual Concord to find out exactly what that end needed. And he would not readily ask a rival dealer for help, of course.

We're just as puzzled as you about Eason. One of the clippings enclosed indicates a prior interest in the case, which of course you already know, but this may indicate an even stronger interest dating back to before any contact you may have had with him on this case (not the earlier ones, of course). Incidentally, Jenifer occasionally feeds him stuff from the NY Times on things she knows he's interested in (neither of us has met him) and in her latest contribution she enclosed a note asking why he hasn't had you on his show, citing your book, etc. It could be a straw that pushed him into action in case he's wavering. The others on his station, Dunbar and Spann, strike us as so married to the establishment that they would be the first to chicken out for any reason. Eason has always seemed to be different. We're puzzled.

Hal we haven't seen for some weeks. At last contact he hadn't yet had a phone installed (no one there during working hours to be present while the installer works) and if he has had one installed since then he hasn't let us know. In any case, we're holding stuff for him until we see him.

Your book finally arrived a couple of weeks ago, but I've had time to read only three or four chapters. Jenifer has been behind with the NY Times and her other reading and clipping for more than a month, and being Jenifer, will probably dispose of that mountainous problem (meanwhile keeping up her housework and homemaking chores without fail) before she even thinks of reading a whole BOOK.* We have not got the Dorman book, mainly because downtown San Francisco is unbelievably torn up with

subway construction and one ~~XXXXXX~~ doesn't venture into that part of town lightly or unless one has plenty of time, which we never had. Only one store here, Tro Harper, handles remainders that we know of, and we haven't yet had an opportunity to look for it there. Paul Elder, you might be interested to know, has gone out of business. His location was sold out from over him for construction of a new hotel, and he sold out to Brentanos. Too bad. That was one hell of a book store. In any case, I shall get the Dorman book if I can and read it, and as soon as I finish your book with do the comparing you suggest, but I think you already know that I think your theory is entirely plausible and consistent.

We hope your hookup with Pacifica works out well. It should, if the Berkeley station (KPFA) is any indication. We don't know Kuttner, but he has been sending some interesting tapes through from Washington. Next time you are in New York, you might try WBAI, the Pacifica station there. The news director is a guy named Paul Fisher (We remember it as Paul) who did a magnificent documentary on the veterans in the recent peace demonstrations in Washington, climaxing with Kerry's impassioned and very moving presentation to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. The Pacifica stations always have been close to the blacks, the really influential ones. They were pioneers in the civil rights movement and have never let up. They do not censor and let everyone have his say. You could not be in better hands, if KPFA is any guide. Let's hope Kuttner lives up to the tradition. Incidentally, Dellums is doing a regular taped commentary ~~for~~ for Pacifica. He owes them a lot, whether he would admit it or not.

The WBAI phone is (212) 8260880. The station recently moved, we understand. That might ~~xxxx~~ explain why you failed to reach them.

We feel sure you must be well aware of this thought, but we have wondered for some time if the incredibly poor job your publishers are doing for you might not be a superb job for someone else. Could this be the latest way of dealing with a problem like you? Even with a publisher your stuff doesn't go.

In haste, with apologies and best regards,

*Reared in the stern tradition of DUTY before pleasure.