

2/17/71

Dear Jim,

Finally got that legal enormity filed yesterday, 111 pages of argument, law, doctrine, response and accusations, also motions, plus 28 exhibits running twice that many pages, as I fell apart about as soon as I did. Now I've got six weeks of cleaning up to do, and fast, because I'm going to Memphis Tuesday for the Ray hearing Friday and to do a little lookin' and listenin'. And, annoyin'.

On Hal, if I can agree with everything you say, I add one thing: he's hung up on something. This is too inconsistent with his past in his present silence. I imply nothing sinister, merely that he will not discuss it or hasn't yet understood it himself. On the contact, please, when you can, ask him to drop that. I've arranged it directly by mail, the way I didn't want to. He has been and may currently be the subject of some official interest, but I decided to run the risk. On the Property Owner, fine, if and when he can. Right now it looks like 2,500 pages, including much that superficially is worthless but can't be assumed to be. I'm getting every page.

But I'm glad Paul's thing hasn't turned him off. I fear it had overwhelmed him with futility. I have not and never had and doubts about Hal or his interest or intentions. I know the problems of money only too well.

I wonder is that he is "miserable and discouraged" is ~~entirely~~ entirely from lack of employment. I hope it is. I wish I'd know earlier that his friend with the tax business couldn't use him, for with a brushup before the seasons I'm sure he could have located with H&R Block. Too late now.

When you see him again, please try and persuade him that ~~ix~~ he is not and should not consider himself in the middle on the melon business. I think, however, that it is his own attitude toward it that accounts for his lack of communication with Paul. Hal has no obligations or responsibilities with it or for it. As of now, I'm satisfied that we/I killed it. From all indications, absent real cunning and deception, this is the case.

About some of the kids he is right. Two of the best with whom I work are of those years. Their concern is with the integrity of society, and that is the keystone, once they understand, the touchstone. And on the point of their unwillingness to believe any official story, I think that all the court papers to this point in my suit for the clothing/pix, with an introduction of a few pages and a few facsimiles of the DJ written lies to me, would make a runaway underground book simply because it documents what these kids know in their guts more than in their minds. The fact is that what I files just yesterday is longer than Eostein's book.

I can't anticipate its effect, but if the judge takes the time to read all of that, the hearing will be somewhat electric. I accuse and prove perjury, by the head of the Archives, of what under the canons is misconduct by the USAtty, and the intent to trap me into default. Which is not the kind ~~of~~ of pleadings to which Courts are well adjusted. We'll have await the unravelling of time.

Unlike what I wrote, I'll have to keep the ribbon copy of the original because of the possibility of errors in what I submitted. However, if you want to load yourself with 110 pages, legal-size and most 1½ space, I'll lend you a carbon. I do not encourage it. And there is, in Washington, a clear xerox of the original from which copies can be made at about 4¢ per page. I arranged that before filing.

If I have anything for him, I'll send it to you and ask you to keep it. He lives at a sieve that is under constant infra-red illumination.

Never worry about me expecting anything promptly unless I indicate it. Once upon a

time I was the world's most impatient man. Today, no matter how much I push myself, I never rush and I am always asking, should this wait. Yesterday I was offered an all-expense trip to New Orleans by someone who wants me to do something there that he can't do for himself and can afford it. I told him that much as I'd welcome a chance to get back to N.O., and many things as I still want to do there, to wait at least two months because it is premature. I've learned to await that rising in the tide of the affairs of men as I learn to wait the ripening of the persimmon (if you've ever eaten a wild one not ripe, you know what I mean!). My ulcer is healed, and the only time it ever gave me any trouble was from incorrect medication for a mechanical problem. I've adjusted to almost everything, including the fact that, in the society in which we live, what we seek will be long coming. So, we work toward it, hoping that any one thing can accomplish it, but not ~~mislead~~ self-deceived by the anticipation that it will. If Hal never speaks to Property Owner, I'll not be bothered a bit, much as I hope he will and that said P.O. will turn on. This attitude has developed to the point that I now have only an academic understanding of Hal's frustration and depression. If this sounds ~~me~~ cold, I live with a debt between \$35,000 and \$40,000 in size, a small regular income for only the first quarter of the year (my wife's), and it doesn't any longer interfere with my work or my desire to work. (And, I regret to say, with complications and problems Hal can't begin to conceive.) But he need make no apologies. The one thing that bothers me is what bothers you, his reluctance to pen a brief note. But please don't suggest it to him. Let him work whatever it is out.

I've been expecting a local-paper interviewer because of the P.W. review I think I sent you. I learned how really turned on the reviewer was only yesterday. He had a ~~lunch~~ lunch date last week with the p.r. director of Random House, and seems to have spent much of it (for which said p.r. director had other purposes) raving about FRANK-UP. But, she appears to have been nice enough to have phoned the publishers and told them of this.

Lil has the letter reminding her that I want her to get some Chinese trousers on the coffee table as a reminder. Last night she worked until 11, completing a dozen income-tax returns. Usually I have to awaken her. She was up before six this a.m. and in the office long before 8. She'll write about them, thanks.

I still know nothing about the - or any- promo plans for the book.

Best,

In other words, it's clear that this problem is consuming all his energies. He says he has not seen Paul, and hardly talked to him in the past few months, and then by telephone. Our impression is strengthened that he is acutely uncomfortable at being in the middle of the melon dispute and that he is deferring or avoiding coming to grips with it. In this connection we have nothing to indicate that Paul could have turned him off -- too little contact, I'd say.

He is attending night school, brushing up on his German, which he says he understands fairly well, with the idea that he might get a job with an American firm in Germany. He has obtained a list of such firms and is sending job applications and resumes to them. He says the pay there is far better than anything he could obtain here, the tax situation perfect for the first 18 months, and that opportunities at least exist there with a better prospect of something materializing than here, although he says he would much prefer a job here. We presume the fact that his girl friend is still there cannot be counted out of this equation, although he appears offhand in his references to her.

We believe him when he says he is still interested in our mutual concerns. He mentioned one specific minor lead he is anxious to follow up but hasn't been able to because of his job hunting. For another he said he recently has encountered a number of young people who were in their very early teens at the time of the JFK assassination, who missed the impact of it entirely, and to whom the whole question is an entirely new world. When they do get a glimpse into what has been going on, they are quite as shocked and outraged as if it had just happened, and in Hal's opinion constitute a whole new generation of kids whose interest is easily aroused. This differs from the speculation I indulged in in my last letter to you, to the effect that he would not get a class organized at this time. He obviously thinks there's a whole new crop, one that doesn't buy ANY official story and is quite prepared to mistrust this one and become exercised about it.

From what I have said, about Hal's depressed state and the priorities he feels compelled to accept, I hope I have not misled you into expecting prompt action on the two requests you made of him, although we both feel sure he will do what he can as soon as he feels able to do it. We think he feels as we would: that anything we might undertake for you deserves to be done as well and as thoroughly as possible, and that we would be doing you a disservice if we allowed you to think we could do more, or do it sooner, than we might be able to under the ~~conditions~~ conditions that govern our capabilities. He's very unhappy, and, as he put it, has been just too absorbed in trying to find a job and even just stay afloat, to take on anything else.

Not much comfort, of course, but there it is. Let us know if we can help in any way. And best from us both,



jdw

11 February 1971

Dear Harold:

This replies to yours of Jan. 31 in which you had two items to be turned over to Hal. We had been trying to reach him by telephone, but had never been able to make connections. When your letter arrived, we continued trying to reach him and he called back on the 7th and came out on the 8th. We had not seen him since before Christmas. I was working the night of the 8th, and so missed him. However Jenifer kept excellent notes and I think I can give you a fairly comprehensive updating.

He says he will make an effort to contact the property owner, but in this, as in the other project, you will have to make allowances for Hal's current limitations and priorities.

In regard to the other man, Hal does not even recall his name, but does remember the person and knows whom you're talking about. He says he will have to dig back into his notes, now more than two years old, and then make an effort to contact him and set up the arrangements you wish. He has that separate sheet you wrote on this matter, and says that if he cannot locate this man readily he will go to his old address and try to trace him from there.

As he read through your main communication he came to the part ~~xxx~~ where you remark that he seems turned off and said that he was NOT turned off, was still just as interested as ever and indeed more fascinated than ever, but that he has been so desperately preoccupied with finding a job that he simply has not found the time or spirit to tackle something as involved as he apparently thinks writing to you would entail. He said something to the effect that when he was working, he could come home, turn it off, and plunge into working on his real interest without difficulty. Now, he says, he finds he can't do this. For our part we don't see quite why he can't write you at least a note to reassure you, and he said well, maybe he would, but it was obvious he seems to think he cannot resume without resuming more or less totally.

He is miserable and discouraged. He has canvassed the job field throughout the entire Bay Area and has found nothing except one opening in Richmond which depends upon the disability retirement of the incumbent, and has no feeling that this is likely to materialize in time. In the meantime, the tax return job on which he was counting collapsed on him because the employer cannot afford his services. He is on unemployment compensation, which, little as it is, expires before too long. He owes money -- I have no idea how much. I am reluctant to give you even these details but it is necessary to convey the pressure under which he feels himself.

He consumes long hours standing in line at employment agencies (he says the situation there is much worse and congested than during his last experience with them) and then more time traveling all over for job interviews, often having to come back later when someone isn't in.