

9/19/71

Dear Js,

This has been a quiet, rainy day on which I did a dozen letters, the longest of which is enclosed in the event it is of any interest to you. I did not say "nice" day because it isn't for Lil, who has a sick sick headache and has spent the day abed. She was just coming out from a siege with her hiatal hernia - which you do N-O-T know she has - probably an unanticipated bonus from my puboisher, when this suddenly hit her. I fear most of it is of nervous origin, and she sure has enough to work on her nerves, beginning with me.

There was another incident I think you'll find amusing, which also is not the purpose of this note. On the 14th the Post ran one of its old-time Wiggins editorials with the Attica prisoners the only bad guys and the murdered guards the only victims. I wrote them a short letter. Yesterday we had as company two of our favorite people, Ian and ~~Stark~~ Cris (pina) McDonald. Cris is a professor of anthropology at Howard and Ian is the No. 2 man at the Times of London DC (he isn't old enough for the "o. 1 so they sent a replacement for Louis Heren, who is semi-retired in London as American Editor). Ian had save the week's Times for me and brought them. It was probably the best medicine Lil had, their visit. Ian and I were chatting about many things, and my recollection went back a few years to the case of a young friend who is one of the first to unsuccessfully take the draft to the Supreme court. He refused to flee, to go to France or Canada, electin jail. By accident we were together the day before he turned himself in for jailing, and we had a talk about his natural unhappiness. He said that he hated to waste those years, and we had a talk about this. I remember telling him that it would be a waste only in terms of his plans and hopes for himself, not in terms of what he could do. What could he do? Give the denied prisoners the benefot of his beliefs and education. I thn predicted that with enough men like him sent to jail, the character of the jail population would change, and while this is far from all that caused it, the trend and the results were as I foresaw. It has to be inevitable when the jails are stuffed with stuffed heads, political prisoners. (Ian told me he had seen Tom Wicker on TV and had heard him say the most surprising observation at Attica was the eloquence of the prisoners.) Well, with this kind of conversation, Ian was surprised when he went through the Post today, his to work, and read "my" letter starting with two graps of pure radical-right guff! I got the carbon out, phoned the Post, and had a longlong series of "oh,mys" from the poor innocent on duty after the ed page was locked up. It is defamatory. I assured him of the obvious, that it is a typo, but also told him that while I would not press for instant remedy, I would look forward to an effective and complete one. We'll see the form it takes. I have a notion I'll ask for a supply of copies and see if they do that.

Today I listened to a barely (and often entirely) incomprehensible tape of an interview with Ray I asked Bud to tape. I used the hand-stopper for the first time and I agree with you, it can be the more convenient and in this case was. But I learned from this tape that when I see Ray I'm going to need a pair of mikes. The accoustics in that all-concrete room are terrible, and he speaks sometimes softly, sometimes fast. The combo is not good. So, when you have time, and when you can call your good shop, would you ask them if this is possible with this machine? I'm still waiting to hear from my police expert about the plugs. All I want to know is will the thing work okay if I have a pair or mikes in parallel. If so, I can then worry about how to do it. I have never had this problem before and I do not anticipate any circumstance under which I'll ever again need this. It may be easier to use two machines, the good one for him and the old one for my questions.

I don't know if my letter to Ray means anything to you, but I thought it might, perhaps, give you a notion of one of the problems, the strange cat who has to be kept out of the trap and who really believes there is no trap.

Best,