

DEC 19 1971

12/17/71

Dear Js,

Suddenly the deceptive 75-degree weather is gone, replaced by seasonal cool and the realization that Xmas is but a week away.

I've been playing kookey from most of my usual work for several days, trying to get a little more exercise while the weather permits. I've been enjoying it while I can, for with the ground wet it is not fun, soon 'til will be working for the rest of the bad months, and I've too much I've let slip, most on the mind being preparation for our damage suit against the government and completing POST MPTM, for which there seems to be no immediate prospect.

I've been taking down multiflora roses, if the Missouri farm boy ever fought them. Lengths of 40 feet are not exceptional, and they twine as they climb, locking around themselves and trees, especially the lovely white pines I want to save. Summers chiggers forced me to quit, and they'd about taken the place over. Stems 3-4" thick are also not uncommon, so you see it is a struggle. One I enjoy, and as I look at the lacerations on my hands I am reminded of the time that now seems so long ago when I cleared the land I farmed. Honeysuckle lacing itself through the roses make unfair competition, but it also is good for the arms and the back. Today I made three large stacks, after separating what is large enough for firewood. Imagine-roses for firewood! When the ground is wet enough, the wind still and I've standby manpower, I'll burn these and the other stacks yet to be made nearest the house at the kitchen side.

I suppose that part of it is really a mental fatigue, and subconsciously I thought the mind should get a short rest before returning to its usual pursuits that must seem so quixotic to so many. I began to wonder if it was wearying when for the first time that I can recall I was an insomniac in Dallas. Lil tells me my sleep has been restless since returning. It disturbs hers. I have been dimly aware of things on the mind but not aware of what they are, like dreaming and not remembering the dreams.

Before taking this sort of break, I did complete my notes on the trip. All I had not otherwise recorded are typed. Some are in longhand for when Lil feels masochistic enough to try to read them, others are taped, with a Dallas friend to transcribe them. And all the accumulated mail is answered.

And so, with the dark come upon the outside work, when I sat to rest a bit, I realize how close the holidays are, and this is instead of a card for which we've not been able to take time for some years. I sit with a glass of Italian brandy I got long ago when I found Lil liked it and it was quite cheap (I'm not robbing her-she hasn't been able to take any since before Ned, when the finances got really rough during the summer). It is a good time to recall acts of friendship and to appreciate the fact of friends - and to be thankful. We are. And of one of your generous acts I was reminded again last night, when with my hands to raw for other things I sat and listened to about three hours of an interview by others in Dallas, a dub of a dub of a clandestine tape my comment on which I believe I'm sending you. The quality difference in the TC40 was significant - and the other machine is back at the factory again, anyway.

There is little else new. I've got a dozen color negatives of the clothing from the Archives, but no negative viewer. I think they are other than I ordered, and my local processor, a one-man operation, is sick. I'll probably have to go to the Archives and supervise the taking of what I want, if I can arrange it. They just can't understand that all I want is the damage to the clothes. Or they so make out. A note from the secretary at Outerbridge & Dienstfrey tells me that Dienstfrey is leaving, which I take it is not a sign of financial security, and that they have finally agreed to present me with legitimate cost figures that are to represent the agreed advance. Getting to this point, where all I've have to worry about is getting legitimate figures and then extracting

the overdue money, has taken disagreeable months of effort.

It seems funny not to be going to Washington as often as I did, but I find I'm happier not making that trip. We go tomorrow night for the annual Xmas party of a friend (Times of London Scotsman Ian McDonald as his Philippine wife Crispina), a professor of anthropology), most of whose guests are now once-a-year friends. Tuesday I have to go again and don't know why. Marcus Raskin phoned when I was away and his secretary phoned again two days ago to ask if I could come in then. He used to be with JFK, has been with the Institute for Policy Studies for some years, did much of the original good work on Viet Nam, started The New Party for the vanished McCarthy last Presidential election, and is one of those starting it up again now. He was in Dallas for their meeting there when I was. They got surprisingly straight and generous TV coverage from the reactionary stations. I'd like to think these folks will get interested in the political assassinations. I'll learn intime.

Then my new friend from Mexico is coming, according to a letter received today, the Pearl who became a Gonzalez long enough to have two kinds but was born a Brooklyn Fishbine. She has some support from a magazine for a piece or at least research on the Joel Kaplan case. Remember, I told you when she asked me to collaborate on a book on it. She's bringing her files, which include a number of interviews with him, his Mexican wife, and the odd assortment of his attorneys.

A more surprising guest due in January is David Chandler. Today I got his scanty notes of the time of the King assassination. He doesn't recall his sources, but he got tips on things that have been of interest to me. He's doing a book on the Mafia. He is still with Time-Life, and they like him much.

And unless there is another change, I go to NYC 1/15 for a taping of the Al Capp show, a new one held in abeyance until his criminal charges are disposed of. Sick stuff, sick man.

At some point in all of this I'll have to go to Wilmington for a hearing in a suit I've brought in an effort to collect money a book wholesaler there owes me. I've been my own lawyer, with some success. The papers I filed forced their lawyer to ask the judge to dismiss his own motion to dismiss. He is now talking of depositions. That crooked bastard will soon find out how much more than paying the honest debt it is costing him to try and cheat me!

So, if nothing else, with all that remains to be done, there will be a change of pace, new faces, new things, and I guess that is good.

This is a rather long Xmas card. I began with no more than the purpose of saying thanks again for all your kindnesses and to wish you well.

Sincerely,

