

Dear Friends

3/27/71

This letter will have to serve as inadequate response to what I have received from some of you until I catch up on many things that accumulated during two trips to NYC, of which I'll write. Examples, large mailing from HR, letter r'c'd today from RB, tape from JW, and others from those to whom I'm not sending this.

Last weeks there was a "Bandy" Show on Channel 5, WNEW-TV, in NYC. They told me Percy Foreman had agreed to confront me. What they didn't tell me until the night before the show is that Hanes also had. However, concerned about the dilution of the fact by cheap mellerdrama, I agreed, having no meaningful choice. I got there, there were delays attributed to lights, which, as a pun, may be the case, as it may also be in fact, I was made up, and I waited with a glass of Scotch thoughtfully provided by a very pleasant girl who is production assistant. The wait lasted about an hour, then the producer came in to share a "problem" with me. Foreman had walked out, saying he would not appear on the same show with me. There was a kind of a threat to me, that I'd best stay out of his way, which I have since addressed in a way, that, for me, is rather modest. They made it clear that he had threatened them and that they were worried, but had been enjoined against telling me, and asked me to take it easy. I did, accepting a role and enforced silences and endless interruptions and delials of response that otherwise I would not.

When they aired the heavily-edited show, they added an announcement that "the other side", perhaps phrased somewhat differently, would be presented the next week, meaning tonight. With Hanes already appearing against me (and soon joining me, abandoning even the pretense that he was not mercenary and actually saying he was more so that I had accused him), and Foreman having refused, it was apparent this other side could only be government, and I began what with a bit of understatement I present to you as ardent persuasion that they should not do this without me -and had better not. I think my reasons, advanced with as much candor as force for the latter, were persuasive. I was accepted, the evening before the morning I had to go to do the show. The day before they admitted they were going to have the surrogate of the prosecution, Robert K. Dwyer, now a judge, then chief of the prosecution in the case. They denied what our able, imaginative and incredibly resourceful New York delegate had been told by one who seems to have become a friend of mine, that Hue had also agreed. In the ~~next~~ last minute they also said that Hue had agreed to appear, with a stipulation that he would not face me and that not he but the station would give his reason, that he regarded me as an irresponsible writer. I so welcomed this automatic delivery of the audience! And the pertinence of a few choice words in definition of "responsible" as applied to writing and writers, aside from the corruption of this particular case (as those of you whom know Hue's writing can imagine), and in particular our correspondence, which began with my unacknowledged offer to give him everything I had as of the time before I began writing COUP II, also unanswered, and his relatively recent written offer to me of everything he, his lawyers, including Judge Hooker, Gorman and both Hanes had, also in writing. But in the last minute, with the warmth and condescension so appropriate in the great who are so aware of their greatness, when we bumped into each other, despite the station's best efforts before the taping, he appeared to have changed his mind. Maybe he looked at me and decided I was an incompetent, maybe somebody wised him up. Anyway, just before the taping began I was told he would remain, that the format would be first segment Dwyer, second Hue, third me, and last questions, each of the first three to be between the guest and the Bandy. I was taken to a sponsor's both (with Scotch), where I could see both the stage and a monitor, where there was a desk, and I enjoyed those two segments very much. I had a few notes on the unbelievable things those nuts said, went on camera with the request that I be permitted my time also without interruption to address just these. At the end of the second point it became open war, and it stayed that way, through the fourth segment, when it went to the audience. If I'd liked to have had the chance to do it cool, with what heat could not be avoided saved for the end, and to be able to address each point of fact, I think that in terms of mass audience impact it is as good the way it went and, if not edited too excessively and too unfairly, will be dramatic and have some impact. The fine young friends who took me out to a late dinner afterward were exultant. Whatever the relative merits of

cool and heat, there comes a time when coolness is unmanly and self-destructive. When the stupid Huie began to unload on me and all of us as nuts and worse (he actually called us and the audience kluxers), I decided the time had come, and I gave it the heat I felt appropriate, required and, I think justified. It is obvious the audience agreed, and it is obvious it blew Huie, when they engaged upon such an unpredictable campaign of self-destruction intended as self-justification, that I just sat back and enjoyed it in silence, feeling that anything I might say might bring him to his senses. One doesn't have time to think these things true on camera, but my instinct was that he'd offend the general public and alienate the intellectuals, so more power to him. I gave him enough time. And he said much, even about the JFK case and Bobby, the literal truth of which I believe is in doubt. Even that I let alone, again on quick decision. That is another trench, and we'll be in it again.

I think the end product is a whipped and cowed character of a judge who enjoys the dubious distinction of knowing less of the facts of the case than any but two Percy Foreman and Huie. This time, perhaps on his own, perhaps in anticipation of me, Bandy was prepared, and he did the two opening sequences very well, if a bit superfluously. I think they'll have to be edited. I think the station is letting them run long so they can protect him and themselves against him and his lack of showmanship and basic competence. This may be a problem in the later sequences, too. But if they restrict themselves to the essential editing and let the show run over, which they can, by as much as the hour they have, we'll have some people in the NYC area full of doubts and most convinced. I think it is no exaggeration to say they are both ruined, and I doubt Huie will, on reflection, trust himself in the same role again. If the prosecution ever again sends ~~any~~ anyone to face me, it will not be with words. I am getting an official tape and we already have one made by NY Agent No. 2, who has both shows, unedited. NY Agents 1 and 2 both made air tapes, leading NY Agent No 1 to the knowledge that heads have to be cleaned and the end product of a single air tape that can be dubbed. It is not a hot show, but it was, I'm told, effective. The first dub made, which reached me in my absence, is for Bud, for I think it holds some interesting and possibly valuable tidbits I squeezed from Hanes.

I also BLEW Gerold Frank, who ought to be praying that his book is not in type. He was part of the Huie-Dwyer parties (and they had their wives, poor men!). He was so beyond himself that he rushed up to me at the end of the show, inspiring wired NY Agent No 2 to follow him and capture enough of what he blabbed on tape, to tell me that I had come into the case three years too late (!), that he had such things as the King autopsy pictures (and I will give the family and the SCLC a chance to sit still for that, too), that he had proof the family had agreed to the deal (ditto with the sitter). If his book comes out now, and there is any promo, we must have some kind of fund-raising campaign for me to go along and oppose on every show his big publishers gets or for me to go first the FCC and then to court, for the possibilities are enormous, given the Doubleday investment (six figures) in Frank and his mid-West Tobacco Road, with all he has been fed by Huie, Foreman and the prosecution and the government. If and when the word gets around that Foreman followed his verbal threat with a telegram and then a letter, without a word being aired, with the federal assault on the media, and with the clear relevance of the regulations, I think there might, even today, be a chance.

I've got to be brief. With Dwyer, I threw the record at him-HIS record. I had the official transcript with me. When I offered it twice in proving him a liar and he didn't accept, the third time I started to read it and was cut off by the dubbing for a commercial. Bandy was disposed to cut me off, as to that point I'd accepted except for once, when I insisted on a four-word (which I got on tape* response to a long Huie diatribe ("opinion is not fact"), I made clear to the production staff, which could see all and hear what we were saying, if the cameras were off, that I was going to insist. I had told them in advance that I'd do everything I could to cover Bandy, but to be prepared for me to fight him if I felt I had to- and I counselled them to consult the director, who directed the two-hour and twenty minute Burke show I did and "Minority Report" to understand fully what this could mean - so the producer came up during the break and persuaded Bandy to let me make that response. Dwyer on Dwyer, once was enough. He fell silent for the rest of the show, gave for a whining-drawling expression of self-satisfaction at the end that was as effective as spit for sperm. (I even offered him a piece of the windowsill, which I actually do have!)

Dwyer is stright from the characture department of central castings. Huie blows easily. He needs little help, but such lines as " a 'little conspiracy' is like "a little bit pregnant' did help, i feel.

Jerry was great. He did much beside participate in the show and picked up one of the obvious things I missed. The audience was all mine, and I loved those wonderful kids who flocked around me after the show and the few right-ons I got when I was fighting, telling Huie to shut up (those words), that he'd babbled long enough and it was time for so efect. His whole line bpiled down to I am God, I know, and the Hell with fact. In fact, there was no question from the audience that was not helpful, and I was not surprised that a fair percentage were not strangers. It was necessary to take precautions, they were tkane beginning as soon as we knew there wouldbe "another side". I told the station that if they dared, I'd have a press conference ~~next~~ on "onday, with or without support of help, that I'd using other appearances for exposure of this affair (as I would have), and that if black reaction would not be automatic, it might be expressed nonetheless. My biggest problem was with my publisher, who has yet to arrange a single promo and has not yet placed an add. He was against the press conference, so I had to drop everything else and arrange for one to be a sufficient success, which I did, guaranteeing at least one story that would reach more than 4,000,000 adults (I'll still have that, I think, and maybe more from it).

It is the old story, we fight alone, the few of us who still fight, with ~~friends~~ friends who are not. The publisher has blow what no flack could invent. The real story of Percy Foreman, which I learned when I was being made up, and part of which I had learned earlier, is that the station knew he'd not appear if they told him I'd be there. They tried to booby-trap him, I'm sure, to confront him with me on camera. It almost worked, and dirty as that would have been, wow! what a show! Had he walked off, they'd not have been able to do anything but air the case against him I'd already given them to show their lawyers, all in his own words, all in court records, some under oath. Anyway, tne makeup man told me that he and Foreman were chatting while he made Foreman up, and that as soon as he told Foreman he had already made me up, Percy the Great fled-woth half his makeup applied, without waiting to take it off. I think I've had fewer complements as eloquent. My publisher told me there is no media interest (forgetting I'd told him the problem before he saw the book and the only possible way of coping with it). Thus, with Jerry' stalwart help, whn I arranged this first show with a friend who had been a Pyne producer and was then there, we also lined up four radio shows that I did last Friday beginning lunch time, on syndicated and one in the can). Next time I got to NYC, with the help of another friend, who lined up one TV that Jerry could and would have, and with the phone calls I made yesterday a.m. before returning, I have two TV shows and not fewer than three on radio. This is what is called media disinterest! The original printing was to have been 10,000, so they did 5,000, and I understand most of these are out. If this thing really goes in NYC, as it cannif the station promos as it can and should, this time not having to worry about the cost of defending a spurious suit by a Foreman who would have no costs, there may be no books to be sold to the stores! What a life we lead.

I think having tapes may be fun for some of you. With none of you working on this part of the story of the assassinations, I see no other values. If there is interest, we'll see about arranging dubs. But we'll have to restricts this, in most cases, to the tape made off the air. If the station provides an unedited tape, which they would except for their lawyers, it will be under condition I will keep scrupulously, and I have already told them what very limited uses I intend, none public.

But my judgement that going into this aspect could get us around the JFK hangup is vindicated. We'll have to see if the possible can be achieved. There are a few promising possibilities on which I'm working, but there is no time for reporting. Kleindienst and others await overdue attention. I'll have some carbons for some of you. He is the most, excessively the most, and I must help develop the most of the most.

Sincerely,