

JAN 5 1974

Dear Jim,

Because I do things in such haste that I may be able to do more of the impossible number that I try to do, I am aware that sometimes I may be unclear or seem to be unresponsive or unaware. So, I follow up on my yesterday's letter with a report on how the things I attempt work out for me and the kind of experience that controls my decisions that may seem wrong to others.

The government has grabbed at my counteroffer in the helicopter suit. I rejected theirs outright and they have agreed even to the conditions I stipulated. Getting performance may yet become a problem after the judicial ending of it, but it is agreed to. My lawyer's letter of yesterday, which is just about the first working day after I made my reduced demand, came today.

Let me briefly retrace the history.

The government offered a \$1,500 settlement some years ago. I rejected it.

After the passing of some time and after I got our present lawyer, they offered gross \$5,000. I pressed acceptance and I rejected it.

They came back with a maximum, top, final offer of gross \$10,000 and I rejected this but made a counteroffer, \$18,000 net, after lawyer's fees and with no tax liability. They declined and my lawyer again leaned on me. By this time I had the Dutton check in the bank any out \$18,000 debt to the bank reduced to something close to \$13,000. I offered a net \$12,000 settlement, not counting lawyers' fees and tax-exemption in the agreement. The lawyer tells me that to effect a settlement he has reduced his fee but that he had agreement and I should have a check by the end of the month. About the middle there will be some kind of pro forma business in court and it will all be over.

We have, of course, accepted much less than the actual, provable damages, but we have run no risk and more important, there will be no acute pain for Lil.

Remember, I talked about survival. One step at a time. For us the bank was first. That is now accomplished and rather than retreat under federal pressure, which did influence our lawyer, I have made them retreat and made them decide in Washington that they would accept or go to court and risk more.

Has this made me less unacceptable, less hated? No.

Now if you were to suggest that it may add to the desire to do something to me, I would not argue. I would, however, suggest that unless and until there is a radical change, the desires will be more restrained.

Can something happen? Yes.

But, and for me a big but, if and when it does, Lil's situation will not be as bad.

My belief is, I think uncomplicated. No ~~xxx~~ matter what the differences in power, nobody goes out of his way to fight with one who fights back and fights hard. This is part of the reasoning behind my making charges at each step in my FBI suits, particularly in the spectro case before the court of appeals in the almost unheard of motion ~~lesar~~ finally filed.

My figuring was close. Lil has about the difference between what we owe the ban and what we will be giving it coming to her from an overdue bookkeeping account. The man has promised to pay. If it is only in instalments, he will do it because he depends upon her, she has done well by him, and we will be out from under the danger of foreclosure.

Now I can turn to trying to meet other debts.

I look back on many rough fights. I mean really rough and where I did not have such public sympathy as, for example The Hollywood Ten had. They went to jail; I didn't. Winning and losing are subjective descriptions. I consider I lost none. I paid heavily, but the only alternative was paying more.

However, as you point out, the situation is changing and the changes cannot be ignored. I am very much aware of your cautions and of the fact that they did not occur to me without your prompting.

* * * *

Heard from Valentine. He is willing to see Ray in tandem and to restrict himself to a story on Ray's conditions. I hope Ray and or Bud don't blow it! It can make a crucial difference. I have promised ~~and~~ Paul other worthwhile stories after this.

Best,