

3 July 1972

Dear Hal:

This will have to be, necessarily, a brief and inadequate reply to your firstclass mailings of June 24, 25, 26 and 28. They have been accumulating all week, and I've only just got to reading them, having intentionally deferred it until I could read them all in one sitting and try to give you what reply I could.

First let me dispose of a couple of details. We have no recollection of encountering the name Smokey Cantor, but will watch for it. If it's important, better give us a bit more specific clue than the drug scene.

The landmark department store around here is The Emporium on Market Street in San Francisco. The same firm owns Capwell's in Oakland, but they operate separately. Like Macy's (which came here after the war and absorbed another old-line department store, O'Connor-Moffat) The Emporium has expanded into the suburbs and to larger towns beyond the suburbs. But unlike Macy's, it's been here forever and is going strong while other old-line San Francisco stores like The White House and City of Paris have been forced out of business. Everybody knows it.

If you make the Jim Eason show, be sure to call us collect if necessary to let us know so we can tape it for you. We don't ordinarily listen to him.

Thanks for advising of the Paul Kavanaugh paperback coming along, The Triumph of Evil. Sounds most interesting, and we'll try to find it.

Before I forget it, I have a week of States-Items stacked up waiting to be clipped, but haven't been able to get to it. Hope to during the week, and will of course keep you covered. I believe Jenifer is telling you in a separate note that we've decided the safest thing to do it to cover you fully on this, and on the Demo bugging scene from the NY Times since your source of supply there could dry up on you at any time. It's just easier and certainly safer.

On your troubles with Gary, Larry P., Sylvia and Wecht, we've only met Gary and know the others not at all. From reading the correspondence from you to various of them, and to Howard, we are most of all impressed with the fully straightforward way you have dealt with Howard, seeking at every point to help him protect himself and never taking advantage of him in anyway. I'm sure he appreciates this.

At this distance, and in our necessarily incompletely informed state -- quite apart from whether we're competent to judge, which we aren't -- we can offer only impressions of the problems you present. They are no more than impressions.

In the first place, we feel that you yourself, in the last of these letters you have sent, appear to be considering the idea that no matter what Wecht and Nichols do after they see the material from the Archives, your own work conceivably could benefit in the wake of what they say. We think this is something you have not mentioned previously. In actual fact it seems to me that if the administration is going to use this thing for political purposes, no one has any visible control over the situation and in the end it doesn't matter whether you worry about it or not. Your decision to go ahead and have PM ready to roll if an opportunity presents itself seems the sound and sensible thing to do.

Once again, and I say this at the risk of offending when it's the last thing I wish to do, I must say that the vehemence of your reaction, as to Gary, Larry and Sylvia, seems unwise and unnecessarily risky. I quite understand how they have wounded you. I don't defend them, because I don't know enough to try. But I think you yourself cited two examples of taking almost irretrievable action on the basis of incomplete information. One was the case of Mary Ferrell, which wasn't too serious, but shows clearly how communications can breakdown without either party realizing why and how relying on third parties to maintain communications can lead to misunderstandings.

The other is the business of Howard telling you over the phone what he was writing in confidence, and his neglecting to tell you on the phone that it was in confidence. You then wrote to Gary, Larry and Sylvia on the basis of admittedly incomplete information with results you know far better than I. Wouldn't it have been simpler in the end to have asked them for an explanation, and then acted after they replied? Particularly in the case of the two young men? Sylvia is, I'm sure, another matter, and I too have the impression from listening to a couple of tapes of her that she is probably a uniquely lonely person. The impression was of listening to someone out in space, talking into a void from which she neither hoped nor expected any response. Quite unforgettable, and I'm inclined to share your suspicions of her health. In that case, is she likely to respond positively to the long letter you wrote her? I'd be surprised if she did.

There remains the general problem of what appears to be a lack of loyalty and constancy among most of the young people -- sooner or later -- with whom you have worked and whom you have helped so much. I am just as conscious of this as you are, although I have experienced it only in minor ways because I have been exposed to it only in minor ways.

At the risk of being trite, I always go back to the fundamental differences between the generations these days and those of the past. There are two, mainly, as I see it.

One is that this generation of youth has known nothing except material affluence. It was all around, even if it could not be individually enjoyed. They ^{quite} simply do not know what it means to wrest one's life from the soil, to live in genuine poverty, from one day to the next, with nothing but one's own muscle to depend upon in the end.

The other is that none of them have known anything but a society which could be destroyed the next minute in a nuclear holocaust, a society that says one thing and does the opposite with relentless consistency, that rarely does anything good for the right reason and which in fact cannot admit what is patently right and patently wrong.

The more subconscious this disillusionment, the more traumatic it becomes, and in a general rejection of all the professed values of such a society they fail, as in the case of personal loyalty -- to themselves if not to others -- to realize that some values continue valid whether observed or not. Perhaps it may be only a matter of the weight assigned to different values, I don't know. But it appears, in my limited experience, unrealistic to expect them to return a book borrowed, keep appointments on time, do what they say they'll do, and in general do the things we older ones think we are careful to do. In a way I cannot blame them. They have been brought into a lousy world. But I feel they have not yet thought through what they must do as individuals to make it a better one. Certainly I give them full marks for courage, to do things and take stands we would not have dreamed of getting involved in at their age. This is not quite enough, however. A man has to live with himself as well as with others who also have problems, and until this is recognized these kids are not out of the woods. The lack of empathy, I think, is endemic in the society, not just among the kids. They may be right, some of them, in their offhand conclusion that there has to be a revolution. People seem incapable of getting behind sensible solutions. Has it not been ever so ?

I'm well aware that I'm merely scratching the surface of a situation you know far better than I possibly can, but we do want you to feel that we are far from unmoved by what you have been describing, and that if we can find no meaningful comment to make we are at least being honest. For instance, I think that if EMK would take the trouble to wade through your letters he'd be in a much better position to steer a sensible course and live considerably longer. But I doubt if he will, and what more can I say ?

Wish we could be of more help, and keep it coming.

Best,

jdw