

Dear Dave,

6/3/81

Martin Waldron's obit in the Times, particularly the hint of his love of partying, reminds me of some Memphis stories I may not have told you.

It was during the 10.75 evidentiary hearing that Mo and I got to be good friends.

He then was a very large man, so large he couldn't button his shirt collar.

Each morning, no matter how late I'd been up, I was at the marshal's jail by the time they got Jimmy Ray there. I'd stay until Jim Cesar got there, usually. Maybe a couple of times when Jim did not get there I didn't stay as long as the time they moved Jimmy to the courtroom.

Because I got up early I took to getting a cup of coffee before the hearing began. usually it would be with Mo, unless he were not there.

Often we'd chat during the breaks, of which there were two, a.m. and p.m., each long enough for a smoke.

Mo knew what work I did and that I'd done the investigating, lined up the witnesses, etc., and I'd informed him of some in advance, for backgrounding.

One morning toward the end, I've forgotten who the witness had been, when we left for the morning break, I was headed toward the rest room, which was a little to the right as one left the courtroom, and across the corridor, and I'd stopped just outside the courtroom to light up, when I felt this enormous arm around me from my right, a real bear hug. Then there was Mo's gravel voice, "Hal, you old sonofabitch, ain't you ashamed of yourself?" I asked him why, in some surprise, not realizing he was joking. His answer was "For fuckin' up the State of Tennessee, the County of Shelby ~~the~~ and the FBI."

The afternoon of the last day he got me the same kind of way, similar circumstances, and asked "Hal, you old sonofabitch, don't you know what overkill is?" I laughed at that one and said in that case wasn't possible. We'd just done a job on their last rebuttal witness. Not the last one scheduled. Turned out to be the last one because of what we did to just about all of them, turned them around. He was the antam vice president who was house counsel, a former United States Attorney and the prosecution's publishing expert. I'd gathered what was afoot when they put him on, just before the lunch break, so I passed Bud a note to follow me and skip lunch, that I'd prepare him. I thought quickly, wondering where we could get privacy, for the trip to the motel and back would have taken the entire break. I finally thought of it: Jimmy Ray's cell! It was a nice setup the marshal had. At the inner end of his offices he had two roomy cells, one for men, the other for women, with the very end a room for counsel to consult with his client. Jimmy was always in the conference room by the time we got there. This time I told him peremptorily to get lost so we could prepare and he just went to the cell and waited. I always carried records I thought might be of use with me. The large attache case weighed 35 lbs when full and it was full throughout that hearing. I did have in it records Bud could use and I marked quotes up as I made suggestions to him, if he made notes on what I suggested. So, after about 20 minutes or so I asked Bud to let me know when he was as saturated as he dare and I'd get lost so he could finish his preparation the way he wanted it. I even had time for a quick lunch. And Bud did turn that witness around, dramatically, surprisingly. Of course, nothing really made any difference in that case, which was decided in advance and without regard to truth, justice or evidence. But it tickled Mo, as indicated above.

For that night, the last night, Mo arranged a party, with me the guest. Of the other reporters present I remember Nick Chriss of the LA Times, Paul Valentine of the WxPost and a woman from the Nashville Tennessean. I met Mo at the Downtown Holiday Inn, where all or most stayed, and we got started in the bar before the others joined us. Then we all sat and drank, and then we went for supper, when we continued drinking. We had just gotten the meal when Henry Haile and his white assistant, Lodge as I recall, came in. We all asked them t

them to join us, but they were reluctant. Finally, I think after I told them not to be afraid, or accused them of being afraid, they did, for the meal and the not inconsiderable drinking after it. It was 3 a.m. or so when it ~~was~~ was all over. Haile and we were in the same motel so we walked back together, arguing all the way. He hated me and had had plans that I had been able to frustrate. But he'd threatened me openly, in Bud's presence.

Mo was more than a Pulitzer reporter. He was a fine human being. The last time he was here was just before his illness, or maybe the more serious part. I don't know but I believe there may be a connection because he was then down to almost 200 lbs, a great weight reduction, and he said that when he broke 200 he'd start drinking again. He didn't touch a drop.

Before I was operated on last year we had a long talk. He was home and had been for a while and was quite anxious to be back at work. He told me he'd had congestive heart failure and that there was so much fluid accumulation in his lungs he was in danger of drowning. But he then was hopeful of being back at work soon. He said that when he was well enough he wanted to make a trip here and then loop back with a visit to the Robert Sherill's in D.C.

Mo was, obviously, a southerner. He had the accent. But I never placed it as a Louisiana accent. He was a Louisiana country boy.

We did have some opportunities to do a little good together.

Best,