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Frank to Jim, 26 June 1963

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Wednesday
June 26, 1963
156 Shore Road
Waterford, Conn.

Dear Jim:

It's been just six weeks since you extricated me from the local Bastille, so I guess you're entitled to some sort of a progress report on the carryings-on of your parolee. It will be just that - I'm not in a literary mood. Events in Jackson and other places in the region make me want to get back down there and into the excitement of the fray, although I haven't the vaguest notion what I could do...other than perhaps, permeate the panties of Mesdames Barnett, Williams etc, who must be in dire want of such considering the jelly fish they live with. But alas, that sacrifice would be too great!

I suspect that Anna may have kept you up to date on my encounters with psychiatry, individual counseling, group therapy, and the rest of it. To make a long story short, I'm through with all of them at this point. Their idea was that there wasn't much they could do for me that I couldn't do for myself... which seems to have been your idea right along. About all of them are agreed that I ought to be doing more writing. I think this is probably due to the material I unloaded during my sessions with them. Christ I had them spell-bound.

I haven't done any serious writing that's worth sending you, but I'm scheduled to deliver a talk to the Kiwanis Club a week from today. I will unashamedly steal a good many ideas from you dealing with the "closed society." and a touch of schizophrenia, (I prefer this to 'paranoia.')

I'm convinced that only you and I understand this mess and at times I have my doubts about you. Kennedy committed a grave tactical error when he suggested that white Americans search their hearts and consciences. Beckwith evidently did just that and then put a bullet through black Medgar. At any rate, this is the theme I will use.

As you can tell from the letterhead, I've changed my headquarters from West Hartford to here. I've set up a command post in a basement of my mother's cottage. It's about five houses away from Mitzi and the boys. This is about as close as I want to get to her -- and probably a lot closer than she wants to get to me. I can't say what her feelings are toward me... but I get the impression the less she hears of me in any but a financial way, the better. And she'd much prefer not to be reminded that anything comes from me. For my part, I feel a little guilty about the boys, damn little! But I figure I'll be able to straighten them out this summer. I knew it would be rough for them without a father (drunk or sober), but they've had neither. Mitzi is beginning to realize this. Robert, the youngest, was about ready to join the Catholic church. I was able to put a stop to that (for Christ's sake). Palmer, the oldest, is developing $\frac{1}{2}$ into a second-rate, half-ass hood - stealing hub caps, bending radio antennas, lying to everyone but me, flunking arithmetic, and experimenting in discovering the counterpart to his sparse pubic hair. Much of this is to be expected...he's had to shoulder a hell of a lot, taking care of his brothers and living with that woman. He's going to be quite a cocksman, bums around

① neither father nor mother.

with a shapely wench who's ^{be} ~~ba~~acker than a spade ace...wears red suede shoes, tight black pants, and his long blond hair in a duck's ass cut. If I think I can correct all of this with a kick in the ass, a week long canoe trip, and some fatherly advice, I'm really crazy -- but it will be a start. Charles, the middle one, is damn nearly normal. He devotes most of his energy to staying away from the rest of them, fishing, clamming and baseball.

As I started to say, I haven't got any feeling toward Mitzi... certainly no desire to go back. We've got nothing in common. I realize that a lot of this is my fault but there isn't a great deal I can or want to do about it at this point. She's told the kids I was foolish to get involved in the integration bit. She wouldn't recognize a current event if it bugged her. There's simply nothing there for me. Dutch works all day long and then comes home and sets a table fit for a king for a housefull of unexpected. At Mitzi's you could have some baloney sandwiches if you brought your own baoney and she happened to have enough bread. She's got the dump furnished in period furniture -- menstrual period. This autumn and spring and winter gave me a good look at what things can be. Incidentally, and for the record, you were wrong as hell in predicting a change of feeling in that area.

I guess you saw the newspaper article on me. I felt badly about it for a while. I began by telling him that there wasn't any printable story, but he managed to delete enough of my lack of dissertation, disciplined drinking, and deportment to write up what his readers were looking for. One of the outcomes of the piece was a job offer, so I'm lined up for the autumn. It's at an increase in salary, fewer hours, better conditions etc. That's all I want to tell you about it in this letter. I've told them about my drinking -- they didn't seem to care about that or finishing my dissertation. They had one hell of a fat file on me. I didn't get a chance to look through the damn thing. I'll write you more when I get your Atlanta address.

Warren Brandt came up, Or down - he was in Provincetown - last week. We had a good chat and he spent what was left of the night. Claimed he'd heard from you and couldn't understand why you were still down there. I'm afraid I didn't do much of a job in explaining your efforts. He feels that all of us ought to exploit hell out of the situation. Good ole Warren. He'd had Ray and Sarah to dinner. Thought Ray was foolish in going to California -- thought he ought to take advantage of things in New York while they were going good for him. I gathered that he didn't think much of Ray as a painter, and he wasn't impressed too much with Sarah. Maybe she doesn't enjoy the attention Ray's getting in the city. Brandt thought there was something wrong with her. He himself is bigger than a house and has just bought a 21 room place on Long Island. He's planning to get the thing fixed up this autumn I guess. He's due to take off for Europe in a week or two. After we talked about my situation, good ole Warn advised me to get another woman to replace Mitzi. When I clued him in further, he made his New York studio in the Bowery available to me in his absence. I plan to be in the city in Late July or August, depending on other people's schedules. With luck, someone will snap a picture of the two of us in the Bowery. It ought ot look good in the Oxford Eagle. We could title it: Love among the stumble bums.

Oh yes, speaking of Warren, Judy Reed comes up here about every

week-end. She's spooking some poor kid here, and --according to Brandt -- is running around during the week in the city with some great big black buck/. Damn, when these ole miss chickens cut loose, they can really swing. She's clued Mitzi in on my activities, I guess she got a lot of this from Sidna - but I don't really know. At any rate between Judy and me and possibly Mada and God knows who else, Mitzi is pretty much aware of what went on. It's damn fine not having to conceal anything from her.

And speaking of Mada and Russ, Theyve done a hell of a fine job in getting things squared away for me. A number of parcels have arrived and I guess more ~~are~~ are under way. I gave him authority to get rid of the house at the best he could do. That will leave only the car. I suppose I should have known better than to take Billy Mack at his word. I'm half-way tempted to go down there and pick it up. If you run into any student looking for a way to get to this part of the country, stick him in the son of a bitch and have him drive it up here. I'll buy his gas and oil, and I've told Russ to pay my ~~way~~ fine out of the house money.

Write and let me know if I can do anything for you. ⁽²⁾ I'm damn certain that you'll have no trouble at all in getting located elsewhere. You'll have even less trouble after your paper, if you're willing to leave the South. I think I know what being down there means to you. I wish that you didn't have to be quite so alone. Enclosed is a photo of another lonely Silver. Up here, he's but six pieces.... just one fifth, Jim. My best to Dutch.

Love where it's needed,

Frank

P.S. As I was about to put this in an envelope, Charles brought me a plate of cherry-stone clams, a pot of coffee and an El Producto cigar. That's pretty hard to beat. The radio just carried an employment announcement for a hand screw machine operator, able to set up... sounds like the epitome of automation... and just when I was

P.P.S. I shouldn't have I remind you who to say hello to.

(2) There's an opening at \$12,000 for nine months - if you feel like teaching economic history - (American)