1/7/70

Gary and Dick,

Enclosed are an exchange of letters with John. I haven't kept Dick posted, not to bother him, but as Gary knows, the signs increase that John is off on an ego trip and with a messianic complex where he alone is the savior of the world.

Gradually he has been pre-empting material I told him about on his promise to leave it alone, so I could use it. I believe it is wrong, I don't like it and, regrettably, there is too much chance of his fucking up what he doesn't really understand, he takes a piece of this and a piece of that and each is a thing unto himself to him.

While he has been busily helping himself to my stuff, he is also obsessed with a fear that I am stealing his.

We are a strange lot.

But I must stop this. It is not only a question of my self-respect, where I've just got to stop people from screwing me. Nor is it alone that this thing, endless as it is, is rough on my nerves, which are not as good as they were. Nor is it that when there is no end, how can a reasonable man keep on trying to help others. Above all it is because he just doesn't know enough and his suits is rather poorly done so far. I think it was not alone what I showed him that persuaded Bud, after declining for more than a year, to file suits for me. It is his lawyer's deep concern for the obvious flaws in Johns. That is all that required that very extensive job I did for him during the summer. Neither he nor his lawyers are competent to do it, nor are they sharp enough to have spotted what to me was obvious.

This is a disappointment to me, for not only did John give me his spoken word, he put it in writing. I have not given him back all his own words, just what I consider should be enough. I find it hard to believe he simply forgot, even if I phrased it this way. That also troubles me.

As Dick knows, when we wanted to help him and he said he was doing an article for LOOK, he'd have none of it. He is a plain hog. Unhappy as this makes me, I will still help him if I can - but only if he starts acting honorably. I was sick when I did that work during the summer, and it was placed an added burden of unfinished work on me. He has plenty where he did his own work, plenty where he'll be using the work of others where I did not care, without the open, blackmailing theft of what I worked so hard to get - and without this work it still would not exist.

I am sending these to you only. I hope you are in accord with what I told him. As Gary knows, I've been on the verge of it for some time. When you are here again, Dick, you'll see what he is about to ruin. I think it is the best thing we've gotten to date, and that is also the legal opinion.

Dick, Howard has made three enlargements for me of the end of 399 from his picture. I'm enclosing one. By the way, the Archives has written Howard that John has duplicated this on me, too. I showed him the pictures. It blew his mind. Howard may have lent Dick a carbon... It makes me feel rotten... When you get the print of 399, please xerox a copy for me so I can compare it and see if it is identical with mine. I think my letter ordering a new one may have facilitated their "finding" of the missing picture, but that may not be the case. They've had plenty of time to be in touch with me and weren't. Hurriedly.