

Adams Co. Jail
(about June 1965)

Dear Mike,

I know this seems corny as hell, but there isn't anything else to ~~write~~ ^{write} on. I'm stuck in the Adams county jail here in Natchez--I've been locked up for 5 lousy fucking days. The jailer hates my guts, sees me as a lost, damned sould for my iniquitous, unspeakable activities of trying to promote equality and justice. Consequently he had given me two sheets of paper and refused any other requests. I considered toilet paper earlier but flinched from such a high schoolish idea --besides, I didn't think it would work--but in desperation I found that there is remarkable tensile strength in this stuff. Of course I should have realized this earlier from my itching, blistered ass. As they say tho, 'tis an ill wind...

We were marching on a segregated public park here last Sat. when the cops, who had been trailing us for some time, turned us off the main road to do their foul~~d~~ deed. Namely, to stop the march. They told us to disperse or be arrested. So 30 of us wound up either here or in the city jail. I had the broadening educational experience of being shocked repeatedly by a miniature electric cattle prodder. This is an ingenious pocket sized model called a hot shot, and it really delivers one helluwa shock. This fat detective jabbed it into my arms and back as they carried me to the police car(I had gone limp when they put us under arrest). Quick visions of screaming "Police Brutality" flashed.. through my brain as I was being electrocuted, but even quicker visions of what the consequences of my shouts would be stilled the original impulse ruthlessly. I could imagine that fat bastard stepping me to the cell doors and using the "hot shot" in earnest- Remarkable how little thoughts like that quell all stirrings of heroism.

I'm getting to be quite an expert on jails. In the last two months, nay--7 weeks, I've been arrested five times and jailed

all but one of those times. Vagrancy, public obscenity, disturbing the peace, unlawful assembly, and public drunk. That last charge was the only one with shred of truth to it, and I was only high even then-perfectly capable of passing any test they might have cared to administer me. They didn't care to, of course, tho I demanded them to do so.

I got a letter from Eric about a month ago asking me to join the two of you in Denver for the summer. I had to refuse much as I would love to take off for such a potentially tremendous summer-what with the Jag and the Sunbeam-our own apt.Christ, what the three of us couldn't do! However, I feel bound to continue working here, at least through the summer. To leave now at the beginning of the "long hot..etc. And by God, it is going to be bad news. White people all over town hate us bitterly --I've had numerous threats against my life and health, as have the others working here. The problem is that I'm the only white working in the movement here. That renders me painfully conspicuous. Now that we've started things moving, that the whites know me well, that the summer is starting, we're going to have to take a lot of safety precautions. I'm starting to get scared when I think of the potential Natchez has for violence. This is a bitch of a town, a stronghold for the statewide Klan (its Grand Dragon, E.L. McDaniels, lives here and Klan conventions are held here). The last time I was in jail, one of the prisoners saw me and expressed surprise that I was still alive. Its little things like that which make you stop and think. If I make it through this summer I'll head up to wherever you guys are for a week or two of celebration, drunkenness, good times, etc. God, I'll be able to use the respite. From there I guess I'll go on back to Dartmouth for a couple of terms to finish my sophomore year-I'm planning to take my junior year in Africa--that'll give me a

chance to drop by the P.I. and Europe during the summers before and after my year overseas.

How did your first year of Medical School go? Top honors or what? Do you still plan to be a surgeon, or have your inclinations wandered, as would have mine, towards gynecology. Jesus, what a racket. Piles of money and all the pussy you can get your hands on. I wonder how many women are laid by doctors every year as a result of routine gynecological checkups. They always say once you get that far they never can resist you..

Now that's shameful--I'm not only corroding the little purity left in my mind but I'm risking heavenly ire--and God knows my position is already precarious. I wonder when the hell I'm going to get out of here. Damn, its been five days since I trod soil, drank a beer or had a decent meal or brushed my teeth (Goddamn, my breath is foul). I've read everything in the place -- one good book, an Elery Queen Mystery Magazine, two copies of Argosy, one of Sports Afield, two LIFE magazines, one TIME, 2 Readers Digests (yech) 2 lurid movie-scandal magazines and piles of Catholic and 7th day Adventist literature. The latter items were stimulating, as you can imagine. I've come to the conclusion that my main quarrel with the Roman Catholic faith is its view of man-man with no capabilities of judgement, dependability, etc. Of course the Christian religion and others presuppose a basic inherent weakness in man, but the Catholic faith carries it to an extreme. Being a Catholic would be like being in the Army-regimentation, orders, no thinking for yourself--every phase of one-s life is covered by elaborate rules and dogma.

Back to an earlier topic-where do you think you'll be by Sept. 1st-the date of my departure from Natchez-Boise or Denver? By the

way, write back and let me know what your Denver address will be this summer, so that we can keep in contact--my address is 119 E. Franklin St., Natchez, Miss. If you want to call for some reason, ask Natchez information for the Curtis Funeral Home--they have the nearest phone--sort of an ominous note to have an undertaker across the street, isn't it?

Well, I guess I'll end this. I want to write to a girl who works up in Jackson--I was doing well with her before I came to Natchez. (?) hope I get out of this cell tomorrow on bail. Wish you were here.

FREEDOM NOW
Peter