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January 9, 1959

Dear Albert:

I am giving you a resume of what goes on here, and then striking off a copy of the letter to send to Mike in Paris, together with specifics pertaining to him. Thus I'll save a little time.

The sequence of events leading to the present situation is this:

Since September rumors have floated through the town concerning the identity of Nathan Douglas (Ned). Stanley Kraemer had taken to the air in some university TV program, announcing that as far as he was concerned there was no blacklist, had been none for the last five years, and that he had and would continue to employ persons who had been subpoenaed by the committee. There was no press storm, not a word.

About 2 weeks before Xmas Hal and Ned were approached at a luncheon by George Seaton and Valentine Davies, representing the Academy. They recognized the possibility of Defiant being nominated for the Academy, wished to avoid a third scandal in as many years, said they were going to try to get the Academy rule rescinded, and asked Hal and Ned to help them by giving a friendly interview (non-political) to Tom Pryor of the NY Times, which would reveal Ned's true identity, and permit them then to go to work within the Academy to get the rule abolished.

Ned, Hal and I held a conference. I contended that, this being the season for honors and silver plate, Hal and Ned should wait until they had picked up a number of other awards before considering breaking anything. I felt it was the Academy's problem, not theirs; and that they should save all their fire for a fight if one developed, rather than wasting a single inch of newspaper space when they did not need it. They agreed. They gave no interview.

On Decmebr 31 they won the Drama Critics award. This compelled Tom Pryor to threaten them that he would break the story with or without them. Since it was better with them, they gave him an interview. This was given on the afternoon of New Years' Eve, and was printed in the NY Times New Year's morning.

Meanwhile, I'd had Bill Stout alerted. The instant Pryor forced their hand, I tipped Bill. Result: Bill's New Year's Eve program had both Hal and Ned on, breaking the news locally in a most dignified and advantageous way. There was nothing else to do. Bill Stout is far and away the most influential commentator in this area, and for 45 minutes after the show his board was clogged with calls---all for, only one (Dick Macauley) against!

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For 3 days the industry greeted this with a silence which convinced me (and still does) that we have the best chance of our lives. I shall not go into an analyses of the situation, because it changes swiftly, and each issue must be met the minute it arises. I only ask you to trust me, and to believe that I think I'm acting in the best interests of all. If not, small harm shall have been done: if so, much good will result.

Now please go to the following pages, which give you, in sequence, the following:

1. Announcement Critics Awards, Dec. 31.
2. Pryor revelation in NY Times, Jan 1.
3. Variety's first story, January 5.
4. Ad in both trades, January 5.
5. Mike Connolly, January 6. (Irving Prinzmetl will force an ignominious retraction of this or sue within 20 days)
6. Variety, January 6.
7. Wire I sent George Seaton January 7.
8. Wire to me from George, January 7. (It's obscure. Translation: "Thanks for your cooperation. I sincerely hope the problem can be resolved with sanity. Regards, George.")
9. Ad, both trades, January 9.

Read them, and then I'll continue: