

August 6  
1949

Dear Albert: [Maltz]

Ring has reported to me his conversation with you about the always disagreeable matter of finances. I am, unluckily, in almost the same position you were in several years ago when I wrote you about the PEC matter which I was later obliged to take care of myself: i.e., not as fat as is thought.

I know there have been rumors that I have made millions during the past couple of years, and since you are the current angel of our enterprise I feel a report is in order to set matters straight and to give some idea of what may be expected from me during the rest of the year.

Just prior to the Washington trip---in September of 1947 ---I let contracts for a great deal of work here at the ranch: a mile of paving, an irrigation reservoir, electrification, landscaping, etc., to the total of about \$23,000. The work was in progress when the summons arrived, and there was no way of stopping it. It had been my intention to pay this sum and also my 1947 income taxes out of the \$61,000 due on the current Metro project. As you know, the project was completed and the money was not paid. When I returned from Washington and received the suspension, I therefore had to borrow \$35,000 at uncomfortable terms to care for the short term obligations. Since then my task has been to pay back on this sum and support the three households for which I am accountable. The fact that the ranch and equipment represent an investment of \$150,000 makes prompt payment of money borrowed doubly necessary, for the vultures would like nothing better than an excuse to sell me out.

My income for 1948 was \$34,000, which served to sustain the three households and materially reduce the outstanding loans. My income for 1949 thus far has been \$6,500: \$2,000 from the play, \$1,000 advance against a script whenever a proper subject is found, \$1,000 flat fee for re-writing an original, and \$2,500 from Sam Spiegel for a script. Ring tells me you are under the impression that the Spiegel assignment, which you told him you assisted me in getting, involves considerable money. I don't know what Spiegel told you when you saw him and

John that day, but I had been wrangling with him by mail, telegram and in person about money for some ten days previously; and the final fee, decided upon between us the morning of the day you saw him, turned out to be \$2,500 down for a first draft against \$5,000 ninety days from the date of completion. It is now completed, and we are wrangling over terms for a second draft, for which I hope to make approximately the same deal.

So, as you can see, I am an impoverished fellow. I have now resolved to have no more of these little deals, of which there is always a plethora, since they are no real solution to my truly heroic needs. I therefore intend, during the next three months, to gamble recklessly on original screenplays. I have only written three in my life, but they have all sold, and my record of sales on straight originals has always struck a tolerable average, so that I feel I am not unduly optimistic in thinking that at least one of the present three will find a home.

When and if it does I shall be in a position to make a substantial payment, either directly to you as a way of sharing your present burden, which I know is very great, or into the general fund, whichever you think fittest. Meanwhile, in the unlikely event that we should not collect on our civil suits, I would consider it a moral obligation of the first order to get together with you and work out an arrangement whereby I would share with you the wholly disproportionate expense to which you have thus far been put.

In Jesus' Name!

Lazy T Ranch  
Frazier Park  
California