

April 2, 1943

Darling:

There is so much to tell you I hardly know where to begin. I got here about seven o'clock yesterday afternoon; the train was late; went to your mother's and found a note on the door saying she was visiting Rebekah so came on out to our old stand-bys, the Kellams, where I am now comfortably esconsed in the back bedroom recently vacated by Nell.

I'll first take up the building situation. This afternoon about three-thirty I went to Jesse's office and met Dudley Miller, Mr. Owens, representative of the Dallas sound-proofing firm that was making an estimate on the sound-proofing of studios in the Brown Building, Escoe, and Jesse. Dudley Miller had instructions from Herman to get the cost of the whole installation. He said it would cost \$1550 for the partitioning, painting, installation of linoleum and flourescent lights--everything in fact except the technical sound-proofing of the studios. Owens submitted \$2905.00 as the figure on that, making a total of \$4455.00. We told Mr. Owens that we would let him know as soon as we had a decision to give him. Mr. Miller said he would call Herman Brown in Houston and give him these figures and call Jesse as soon as he had talked to him. We all left about four-thirty.

Jesse just called Mr. Miller (it is now nearly 10 p. m.) and he said he had not been able to reach Mr. Brown yet. Jesse asked him "just to satisfy my curiosity and not to be quoted" what he would want in a lease if he put \$4455 into fixing up a place for a tenant. Mr. Miller said he would want a ten year lease.

Now the question is: will Herman be willing to put \$4455 into fixing up the place, and will we be willing to let him do it if he is agreeable?? Needless to say, that is a great deal more money than I ever thought of it costing. How about you? I think any dealings we have with the Brown boys are going to be watched with an eagle eye by those who wish us ill and we are going to arouse a certain amount of criticism and comment simply by moving into their building--about which I would not give a damn so long as I felt sure in my own heart it was unjustified. In this case I think criticism would be justified and I don't feel comfortable in my own mind about it. The \$4455 outlay amounts to 22 months rent at \$200 a month. I understand it is customary to spend one month's rent in fixing up a place to suit a tenant. In this case, I think he could well spend more because that space has been rented less than two years of the five the building has been built; it's a sort of "Jonah" space and if he can get a reliable tenant it seems to me he would be justified in going quite a bit over the usual outlay. But I don't think he could put out \$4455 without it making a mighty sorry tale of favoritism to a helpful politician in case somebody wanted to make something out of it. What do you think? And everything always gets known--that one can

depend on.... I keep on thinking of those paving blocks....

Senator asked me to go home with him for dinner with them. I did--had a wonderful dinner, delicious steak, with much talk of babies and gardening, and a good deal of private discussion between Senator and me about the radio business. I asked him shortly after lunch to get in touch with Everett and try to bring the three former owners to prompt action on the judgment business--that is, put up the \$700 each to appeal it or pay it off now. Senator tried to call Everett but up to now has not reached him. I shall keep after them both tomorrow until I get find out the latest developments and get them to prod Walker, Stuart, and Anderson again if necessary. I will report to you tomorrow night.

Dearest, I talk freely to Senator and Jesse, guardedly and very little to Escoe, and none to anyone else about the business of the radio--and I believe I can tell what is "private" business and what is purely general knowledge and harmless to discuss. If you want me to be guarded even with Senator or Jesse you had better let me know.

Senator thinks the same way I do on moving into the Brown Building in view of the \$4455 expenditure. In fact, I would say he definitely against it. He points out that the KNOW station people and others (it seems to me Ed Clark's name came in here) were "listening for such a tale as that" and also that the revenue people have been and will continue to be investigating the Browns and their books from one end to another. He said that he saw Herman Sunday--but I guess he told you this in his telephone conversation yesterday--and Herman said he did not know just what John expected in the way of fixing the place up. Senator said--whether Herman told him this or he just gathered it from his manner I do not know--that he thought Herman would not mind the amount of the expense and would be willing to pay it, whatever it was, but thought it might be harmful to both of you and you more than him.

At any rate, as soon as Miller relays to us the word from Herman I will get you off an airmail special. Maybe the answer will be no, which ends it, I suppose (but I doubt that it will be a simple no); maybe it will be yes, which still leaves us with a decision to make. I am inclined to vote "no".

Where will we move, then, if we don't move to the Brown Building?? We might give some thought to going to the people who own the building we are in and telling them that we understand the Business College from which we sub-rent is way behind in its rent and about to go broke, that we don't like to be mixed up in such a mess, that we are looking around for a place to move to, that we might consider staying there and renting from them direct if they will make the rent right and fix up the place to where its fit for a business. I understand the Bartholomew Estate owns the building and a young Mr; Bartholomew of the City Council and the

Austin National Bank has the say-so. The place is darn ratty now, but I believe paint and plaster and some floor covering and some furniture would make it at least passable until such time when we can build our own place out at the transmitter. And that I want to do! I'd love to be independent of as many people as I possibly could.

Now to take up another thing. We have \$750 in the American National Bank in the account of Claudia T. Johnson (this is Jesse's estimate and may not be exact.) We have \$1150 in the American National Bank in the account of KTBC, after all payroll checks, issued today, are paid. We must subtract from that the \$1273 to NBC and the \$300 to Sesae whenever you pay them--or the amounts for which you do settle. We must also subtract the enclosed check for \$480 to INS if you decide it is the wise thing to do to send them the enclosed letter and check. If all three checks were cashed, that would leave us about \$150 in the hole. Escoe does not have the exact figures on how we came out in March--says we sold \$2915 worth of business and are going to break even or almost break even but does not yet have the auditor's figures. He promises them within the next two days.

Now to take up the status of INS. Coming down on the train I read Broadcasting, both magazines and Yearbook, from A to Izzard, and if I don't know what's right to have I do at least know what other comparable stations have and get along with. There are 50 commercial day-time stations: of these 19 have PA, 30 have UP, only 5 have INS, and one has something called TB. Only three of the 50 have two news services. Escoe says we do not need INS at all, that PA is a fine and highly satisfactory service, that he has had quite a few letters of congratulation on acquiring it. INS is costing us \$35 a week and I think that is one expense we should get rid of as soon as we can legally do so. I suggested that we write a letter of cancellation and in-close a check and Jesse and Escoe arrived at what they considered a satisfactory letter. I don't know. If you approve, mail it and let us know. I fine, to my chagrin, that the six months means we must let them know of our decision to cancel six months before the date of expiration of contract, which is in August, therefore we should have let them know in February. It is possible, then, that they could legally compel us to keep the service until August 1944, but Escoe assures me that the worst we can get stuck with it is for six months from date of giving notice. How valid his grounds for giving such assurance are I don't know. Anyway, "time's a'wastin'", and the sooner we give them notice the better in my opinion.

I'll give you my reaction on the libraries, Escoe, the personnel, ASCAP, and Herman Brown's answer tomorrow. Now I'm so tired I must go to bed.

I love you with all my heart and wish so much that I could report only progress and smooth sailing.

Your devoted