

Sent to California in error

April 18, 1969

Dear Marge:

Your letters: Thanks for your last two fine ones, so dutifully thought up and indited. I wish I had your moral fiber. So many of my worthless thoughts are aborted by not applying the seat of the pants etc. Answer: I was born in September, the fifth that is; if that is Virgo and you are right in your appraisal of this period that certainly accounts for a lot of my trouble. I didn't know there was a reason for my shyness apart from the usual long string of you know whats. Sometimes I wish I was a black man so that I could blame all my troubles on that. So few of the colored seem to realize that the difficulty of being is really the basic problem about living. But perhaps they have to get the quality thing over with first. Did you know, did I tell you that I am half Italian? I used to worry about that some in trying to figure out who I was (as that banal modern phrase has it) but I finally realized that I was merely copping out (to use another hateful phrase.) Well, little laddie how far afield are we to go today? I'm glad you agree with me about the greater trustworthiness of the non-intellectualized part of the mind. I think that is what held old Hem's work together and so I am always amused when they complain that he didn't write nice essays like MacGawley, etc.

Baker's biog: The more I read this, and it is taking so much time, the sicker I get. This is one of the most massive, hatchet jobs it has ever been my displeasure to encounter. I have written a review of same which I hope will appear later this year in the Conn. Review. In it I attack Baker rather lustily, calling him in thrall to Mary H., a pompous pedant, etc. etc. and finding many critical errors in his work. It is a sad thing that Baker happened to Hemingway when Jonnson had his Boswell. Baker is simply not only unethical but he is a lousy biographer, although no doubt a clever scholar and critic. This biog is really quite a large miss and Baker seems to have been controlled by an engine basically hostile to Hemingway. My God how the man scolds. I think one of the funniest cracks is when he calls Hem "sophomoric" at a time when he actually was a sophomore in high school. I don't even think that's correct usage. Oh there's too much to go into, but the book is so bad that I think even

Hem's detractors will rally to his defense. But the Jewish mafia seems delighted that Baker keeps calling Hem anti-semitic, although is is one of the more outrageous misinterpreting of the evidence. My Jewish friend, Harold Loeb who was blasted as the obnoxious Robert Cohn says the charges of antisemitism are nonsense. While Loeb, like most Jews, is a trifle antisemitic himself, that is good enough for me. Of course Hem's great crony of the last 14 years was Aaron Hotchner and he chose to idolize Hem. They all knocked Hoch's book, but at least it was motivated by love, not by some kind of hatefully pedantry. In my review I really lash out at the Widow Hemingway whom I have always disliked from both instinct and what I have heard about her. And one of the things I heard is so shocking I will not even say it here. Brother Les thinks this circumstance may have triggered the shotgun in Esaho.