

July 25, 1957

Mr. Ray H. Jenkins
Jenkins & Jenkins
Bank of Knoxville Building
Knoxville, Tennessee

Dear Ray:

I am very apologetic for the fact that I have been a very poor correspondent; and this is especially true since Carolyn and I, together with everyone in the office, have enjoyed the very fine letters that you have written.

It is with a keen sense of appreciation for a fine and loyal friendship that I thank you for your correspondence with Martindale. Please do not permit this to become a burden to you; because there is a local aspect that I do not know whether--human nature being what it is--can be overcome. Nevertheless, your friendship and willingness in this matter will be something that we will appreciate forever.

Incidentally, I am attaching a clipping which appeared in the Chattanooga paper a couple of mornings ago which we all got a kick out of here in the office and made the caustic comment that it appears like the Jenkinses are beginning to kill each other. This reminds me of one of my favorite stories about "kinfolks" that I don't think I ever got around to telling you.

We are having a terrific time with John Nickerson in trying to keep his mouth closed and to make him forget the word "appeal." I had a recent letter from Jim Lucas in which he stated he had seen you in Washington and you had expressed pretty much the same views that I have in that John has nothing to appeal from and should forget the word. Carol is of the same opinion that I am that the sooner John quits talking, gets back to work and realizes that the Nickerson case is now ready for the archives, the better off he, Carol and their four fine youngsters will be.

I spent a good part of the two weeks following the trial at Fort McClellan, Alabama, where I not only got some much needed rest and relaxation but saw a good deal of Charles and Nell Zimmer. Louis XIV left on a two-weeks leave the day after I arrived, so I saw very little of him. We did have dinner one evening with General and Mrs. Almond, and he is a very

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-2-

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gentleman who desperately wanted to testify in behalf of John Nickerson and says he feels further disappointed in that he did not get to know you, a privilege which he will look forward to in the future.

Ray, you have been most thoughtful in your writing, and we have all enjoyed your letters. Your friendship and devoted loyalty will be something for all of us to cherish for the remaining days of our lives. We especially appreciate your reference to our getting together, possibly in Knoxville, during the football season. We absolutely must get together from time to time, and it is our plan now that if and when John Nickerson receives his transfer orders to have a rather sizable cocktail party for him in our home. We will have this on the condition that you and Eva come down and stay with us on this occasion. Please know that this is one of the most genuine and sincere invitations you have ever received and one that we will not take a negative answer to.

Please let me know if Claudine did not mail you a picture showing the four of us with John Nickerson as we were on the way to court the opening day of the trial. This particular picture was made by Ernest McMeans, a local newspaper photographer; and in my judgment is the finest picture of the defense team taken during the entire trial. If you do not have one, I will see to it that you get a copy.

Thanking you again for your fine friendship and with warmest personal regards to the two of you, in which Carolyne joins me, I am

Always sincerely yours,

Robert K. Bell

RKB:mfl