

THE WILDERNESS PRESS

201 NORTH ROBERTSON BOULEVARD : SUITE B
BEVERLY HILLS, CALIFORNIA 90211 · PHONE 213-272-0965

LEON W. BERNEY
RICHARD D. LEWIS
General Partners

November 12, 1970

Mr. George Spector
1962 University Avenue
Bronx, New York 10453

Dear Mr. Spector:

Friends of Rockwell Kent have formed a venture to publish his first book, WILDERNESS, exactly as he wrote it. A number of previously unpublished illustrations will be included in this edition, along with seven illustrations which were published in a limited edition entitled THE MAD HERMIT. This edition of WILDERNESS will be exactly as Rockwell wanted it published.

It is being printed at The Ward Ritchie Press, one of America's finest presses, in a limited edition of 1,550 copies, of which 1,500 are for sale, numbered and signed by Rockwell. The design and format have been approved by Rockwell. (A xerox of the title page is enclosed). Display type is Goudy Modern and the text is set in 11/14 Electra. The book will be 228 pages, lithographed on 80# white Andorra text. It will be gold-stamped in cloth and inserted in a slip case. The printer has promised finished books by December 10, 1970.

This edition of WILDERNESS will be published at \$17.50 a copy. We are making a special offer to friends of Rockwell, in advance of publication, of 20% off the list price for orders of five or more copies. (Shipping charges and sales tax, where applicable, additional). If we receive your order and remittance on or before December 10, 1970, we will fill it at this special price. Orders for less than five copies or after December 10, 1970 will be filled by The Ward Ritchie Press at the regular price.

Please use the enclosed form for your order.

Sincerely,

THE WILDERNESS PRESS

By Leon W. Berney
Leon W. Berney

By Richard D. Lewis
Richard D. Lewis

rdl/lwb:jc

attach



AUGUST FORKS
NEW YORK

November 15, 1970

Mr. Leon Berney
The Wilderness Press
201 North Robertson Boulevard, Suite B
Beverly Hills, California 90211

My dear "Bernie":

Upon receiving your package of form letters I was so enraged that Sally, realizing that it was unwise to permit me to talk with you by telephone, herself made repeated attempts to reach you and Dick Lewis by phone. Learning that Dick had moved to a new and unknown address, she concentrated for hours on trying to reach you. But of course without success.

Meanwhile, the first reaction of an outsider, who happened to be a dear friend, reached us by long distance from Florida. The call, confirming what had immediately struck us in your ill-conceived letter, was to express her deep grief at the news of my death which was implicit in what you had written. She mentioned that all her friends joined her in sympathy.

Since then, and throughout one sleepless night, I have considered every possible step that I could take to undo to some extent the serious wrong that you have done me--only, this-morning, to realize, on talking the whole matter over with Sally, that my own position as an artist and a writer in the opinion of those to whom the letter had been sent (both friends and strangers) was too firmly established to be damaged by any statement that these self-termed "friends" of mine might choose to make; and that, in fact, they had only made such fools of themselves as could at most cast added discredit on them and their publishing enterprise--which, pictorially and verbally, they had so filthily (and to some degree lyingly) misrepresented. One of my first thoughts had been to spill to the press my whole repudiation of the shameful document, but I was unwilling to compound the evil by giving it publicity.

To begin with, who in hell gave you the right to use my first name in addressing the many people whom I had listed as presumably, or possibly interested in getting a copy, or copies, of a reprint of a book of mine that had been widely acclaimed on its first publication (and, incidentally, by the authoritative London "New Statesman" as "The most remarkable book to come out of America since Walt Whitman's 'Leaves of Grass.'")? My name happens to be neither Norman Rockwell, nor George Lincoln Rockwell, but Rockwell Kent, and there are scarcely a dozen people of my acquaintance who are privileged to address or refer to me by my Christian name.

November 15, 1970

The list of more than a hundred names that I sent you consisted only in small part of friends, or even acquaintances, but it took only one glance at your Xerox-ed reproduction of the title page to realize that you had seriously damaged the whole enterprise, including the reputation of that distinguished printer, Ward Ritchie.

Represented in your "letter" as an object of your pitying solicitude, I am properly deeply resentful of being made the object of an appeal for sympathy. My pictures--drawings, prints and paintings--are at present selling at prices far in excess of any they had ever brought before. Quoting from a Chicago book dealers catalog, I find that books in the design and production of which I have played but a small part are selling at prices far in excess of those at which they had, not many years ago, been issued, and certainly much higher than you are now, by your special offer, asking for your enlarged and enriched edition of "Wilderness."

It is suggested in your "letter" that my "Mad Hermit" drawings have only previously been published in a limited edition. If you will refer to a copy of the Putnam "Wilderness" (or perhaps you haven't looked at the book?) you will find all those pictures listed as being on Pages 172, 176, 184, 188, 192, 196 and 202. So your statement in your "letter" about the "Mad Hermit" is false.

I appear to have unsuspectingly put myself completely in your hands. I did not know that you intended to issue such a statement as you have circulated in the "letter" you addressed to those "persons" whose names and addresses I gave you; though from the very beginning of your enterprise I have virtually insisted upon your issuing a full statement, in the form of a prospectus, of what your edition of the book would be. If you still intend to issue a prospectus, I must ask you, for my sake as well as that of Wilderness Press, to let it be in format, paper and general quality comparable with at least a page or two (including the title page) of your edition of "Wilderness," as designed and printed by Ward Ritchie. I need hardly tell you that in my judgment you should draw heavily upon the original reviews of "Wilderness", of which I have sent you a full copy--or, if you fail to locate it, I am prepared to send you another set of quotations from reviews.

Well, "Bernie", we have survived the burning of our house and the loss of many of our prized possessions, and I will doubtless--just give me time--survive (if not become reconciled to) the "letter" that you have now sent out.

Faithfully yours,

Rockwell Kent