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NEW YORK CITY 10003

16 March 1980

Dear Laura--

Here are Xeroxes of the reviews as promised, plus a Xerox of the half-page ad which was printed in the Times a bunch of times. As you can see, the daily reviewers, while not unenthusiastic, were certainly less helpful to the plays' success than the magazine people (Time, Newsweek, New York); it's also interesting to look back and see how the critics disagreed about which was the better play--they all felt they had to choose one, and for some reason they mostly used the adverb "easily" to describe which was better.

As for the ending of Rubbers, I think I gave the DPS the version you have because I felt the Henny Youngman stuff was a little too puerile; that the Speaker was like a parent coming in and stopping the children from playing their games--and as such was a fairly scary character. Arkin, however, didn't like the play becoming serious at all, and urged the one-liners. Do whichever you think is best, but do weigh whether the jokes might undercut what is a semi-serious point: that the legislature is a club (in every state), mostly for men, and that whoever the speaker is, that's where the power is.

~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ I should add I couldn't find the one-liners anywhere; I think Rubbers is buried in the basement somewhere.

Generally, I would caution against changing things which may seem to be only of local interest--please don't change Red Smith to a local LA journalist or all those names ~~of~~ of towns in Rubbers (the individual names aren't the joke anyway--they sound funny all accumulated) to California names or Phil Rizzuto's name. Even if they are obscure references to the LA audience, I think they will get the point; and anyway much of the LA audience comes from New York and probably knows the references. ~~I~~ I only mention this because once or twice when the plays have been done before--out of New York--the directors felt it necessary to change certain names. I think Red Smith is a great sportswriter--in my opinion, the only great sportswriter--and ~~judging~~ I felt pretty unhappy when I saw one production and the ~~director~~ director inserted some other name, as though ~~I~~ I thought the local boy was also a great sportswriter. Just a word of caution.

I guess I should once more stress the rhythmic precision of Rubbers. I wrote it in my fascist-playwright days when I tried to get actors to do everything precisely; it was hard, for instance, to get it across to the Acting Speaker that while he should bang his gavel from time to time, he shouldn't do it on anyone's lines; that when Willie dies--even though it's in the midst of confusion--we have to hear his "My heart!" line or it's just ~~chaos~~ chaos; that each of the lines means something--even if they only add to the general lunacy. I'm not nearly so particular in the other things I've written, but Rubbers is a precise farce that works best when it's sort of "militarily" directed.



Anyway, you seemed to understand my feelings about this when we talked on the phone, and I hope I'm not restating the obvious.

Please do keep me posted from time to time--I'm very excited about its being done!

And please give my many hellos to Bob Lesser...

Jonathan

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