

Ansel

Sept. 20, 1975

Dear Laura,

Please forgive the long delay in writing. I keep waiting ~~for~~ for something positive to happen regarding the financing for our film, but people are so slow in responding and then when they do, it's not always in our favor. I've been going around and around with Arco and they finally said no, but Bill and I have never talked to Robert Anderson (the whole deal was handled by one of his men out here) and we think there is still hope if we can get to him.

New Mexico Council on the Arts is still considering the project. As you may know, there's been a big change in administrators, so I had to start all over again with them. And it goes on and on. I had hoped we could be working on the film now ----- So, how are you? I hope your ankle has healed and you're back at work, at least photographing. I was at Ansel Adam's house the other night and he's going to stop printing in Decemeber - therefore his print price has been raised to \$800 apiece!

The film that we shot with you last spring is wonderful - beautiful soft colors with the new color negative - you look fantastic and the scene with Mary Brown will be very moving when it's cut together. Unfortunately we were reloading film when ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ there was an especially quiet, almost meditative moment between you and Mary.....but those things happen, and I think we have enough to convey the mood, especially with all the dust shots outside and banging doors and sheep. I loved being in Chinle so much that I've applied for a job on the Reservation - the Navajo film guy, Virgil Wyaco had mentioned that they would be looking for people to help them set up a film center, so I wrote to him, thanked him for letting us film and asked for a job whenever they were ready. From what I can surmise, they've accepted me, but I guess they're having money delays too.

In the meantime, I've had some good fortune - the Corporation for Public Broadcasting in Washington has given me a \$50,000 grant to make "ethnographic films" (2 of them to begin with and maybe a whole series). It's very possible that some of this money can be used to complete your film, but at the moment things are in a confused state and none of the details have been worked out yet. My proposed idea was to make more films like the Sawmill film I showed you - about men and women in rural areas whose basic skill or trade has survived the 20th century & who work single-handedly. So, we'll see what happens.

Have you started your platinum's yet? I saw Irving Penn's exhibit in New York of his platinum cigarette butts and they were stunning - much to my surprise.

If you have any plans to return to the Canyon, I hope you'll let me know. There's still several things we ought to do there - mainly go down into the canyon. I know it's getting late in the year and I'm trying to communicate a tone of desperation to all ~~concerned~~ financial people concerned. And of course, the most important thing is whether you are feeling up to us running around with our equipment. I think the next time we film it won't be quite as hectic, now that we ~~km~~ all know each other better, and you shouldn't feel that you have to do anything for us. Some of the most interesting moments in the film are when you've forgotten about the film.....especially the scene with Mary. Let me know what your plans are - ~~xxxxxx~~ call if it's easier - (213) 455-2504. I look forward to seeing you again. I'll let you know what's happening with the grant as soon as I can.

All my best,

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