

“LETTERS NEVER SENT: MILES DAVIS TO ROBERT KENNEDY”

By Stan Lukas

Dear Robert,

I've been thinking about you. About the weight you carry. About the strange loneliness that comes with trying to move a nation's conscience forward while the world is determined to pull it back. I don't know if people say this to you enough, so I'll say it plainly: what you're doing matters. Not just in speeches or policy, but in the way you insist on seeing people as human beings first.

You and I move in different worlds, at least on the surface. You work in chambers and hearings. I work in silence and sound. But I've come to believe that we're both chasing the same thing: a kind of truth that can't be faked. In music, you can hear it right away when someone's lying. In public life, it takes longer, but you feel it just the same.

This country is restless. You can hear it if you listen closely, not just in the streets, but in the pauses between words, in the anger that doesn't always know where to go. It reminds me of a horn pushed too hard with the notes cracking under pressure. But sometimes, that pressure makes something new and honest, something that finally says what's been buried too long.

I know the criticism comes at you from all sides. That's the price of stepping into the fire instead of standing outside it. But don't let that noise drown out the quieter voices, the ones who don't get microphones and don't write headlines, but who are listening, hoping someone hears them. You've got a way of reaching those people. Don't lose that.

There's a kind of courage that isn't loud. It doesn't announce itself. It just keeps going, even when the path narrows and the light gets low. That's the kind I see in you. And whether you feel it or not, it's the kind that changes things.

Take care of yourself, Robert. Not just the public man, but the private one. The country may ask for everything, but you still have to hold something back for your own soul. That's where the real strength comes from. If our paths cross again, maybe we won't talk politics. Maybe we'll just sit, listen to something, and let it speak for itself.

Until then,

Miles