

Dear Paul (JL),

6/8/75

While each thing I do or try to do gets done at the cost of something that goes undone I do want you to be informed to the degree you want to be and is possible for us. I can't begin to take the time to spell out what I hope will be apparent enough from my last night's letter to Jim. After reading the transcripts of the two hearings that came yesterday the apprehensions with which I left the courtroom on the 21st are considerably greater. I was sick for the first hearing. One thing that may illustrate this for you is that in the first hearing Jim made non-compliance specific and the judge was already talking about how good the faith of the USDA was and how dishonest he was, already on the record and repeated in more detail at the second hearing, made no difference. When the judge went further and said he'd regard "substantial compliance" as full compliance, I hope I have to spell nothing else out, in specifically this case or in general when this will be the precedent case under the new law.

Whatever the motives of others may be, the fact is clear and the record is terrible, of the worst kinds of mistakes. They can be very hurtful and I'd rather not go into details. In fact, it is depressing to think that it is necessary.

These are essentially political matters. Most of us are entirely without experience in them. Just about all the others find it best to ignore the realities and to pretend that each time I forecast something like this and turn out to be right it has no meaning.

I am aware of the actuarial situation: that the one who has never been wrong in these kinds of things has a high risk of being wrong each next time. In this case it simply isn't possible. If we prevent what looms it will be because of what Jim and I do, not because of anything else.

I really do not enjoy the risks I have to run. I have just gotten one copy only of the affidavit I had to file. I had to start doing this as soon as the last hearing was over. The next morning I had the draft finished. Jim went over it and cut out what he felt should be eliminated and out it in generally better shape. Nonetheless, as anyone with any sophistication at all ought to realize, when I have had to do this in four of the five cases, the odds again become operative. How many times can I lock horns with the FBI and hope to remain unscathed? In this case I have charged perjury and asked the judge to do something about it. Whatever he does we have no reason to look for an easy time. If I had not done this and done it immediately the situation would be much worse. Remember, the lawyer for the other side is also the prosecutor. He is the one who files charges.

The realities are not as they may seem from the distance, from another type of life and another kind of life's experiences. I have been through these things before and there is no way of learning them except from experience. Especially if one is unwilling to begin with.

When what was going on became apparent to me in court as soon as the judge left the room I had to lay it on the prosecutor. I did, too, and he is aware that I am capable of lodging charges against him and that I removed his innocence at that moment.

If it had not been necessary I would not have done it.

The weight we are carrying in this is enormous. It may not be apparent to you and if we pull it off it will seem as though it never existed. There is much I'll have to do that I'll not have time to go into and may not be able to do but must, somehow, try. It is made much more difficult because of the campaigning of a personal nature of so many others, throat-slitting for self-seeking purposes. I am foreclosed from those to whom one would ordinarily turn.

This is partly to try to inform you and partly so you can try to understand some of what ~~xxxxx~~ I have written to which you have been indifferent. The possibilities I see are real, as are my fears. I do not give details where they are not essential because for the other side the situation is also one fraught with the greatest danger. You may not see it but this can be the real crunch. I have to go on the assumption that it is because it can be. If ~~the~~ judge rules for us it surely will be. Others seem never to be able to look ahead.

When we have this kind of situation it is at the least upsetting to find indifference elsewhere aside from those who cause problems, where it is more upsetting

still. In this matter it is virtually all those who seek and get attention, each in different ways. Some overtly, some probabilities.

From the enclosed you should recognize that the so-called scientific experts Nichols and Wecht haven't even recognized that there is major withholding. They have both made a public record that says there was compliance. Can you project what this can mean?

From each of these and from all of you I know who are in college or were or are near one I have asked a very simple thing that is inaccessible to me. The standards for these tests, what is required to do each properly. With Nichols this began in 1967, early 1968 at the latest. More than five years ago Cyril promised it, from his criminalist. More recently I asked it of you and Lifton, who was up to his old tricks, as I'd feared. In all this time no one has seen fit to go to this little trouble. Whatever the reason in each case, can you begin to comprehend the frustration it means? There is nobody around here to whom I ~~can~~ can turn who is not federally connected. I've even tried through faculty friends.

This is why I've had no interpretation of what figures we've gotten. I have not regarded them as the significant element at this juncture but I would have liked to know what they mean. I assume that Winn is close to it and thus I've said nothing more. But the other aspects are the important ones, not what I've referred to as the numbers game.

We ought to have this but with this past I'm not finding it possible to make any further efforts because the past tells me it will mean a waste of time I do not have. This represents a very bad situation holding danger for all and more for me.

We can be seriously hurt in this and in what still is possible from Belin et al, who have had the kind of insane help nobody can begin to expect when one sets out to do what that Commission did. Temporarily the needs of the CIA took precedence. I understand that Belin put up a real fight on the inside and lost. I do not think this will be the situation indefinitely because of Ford's needs.

In any event, for whatever little it can mean, I'm trying to explain what you seem never to have been aware of and what it means here.

We have a political situation and it has to be met. It ought not be impeded. It is being impeded, in various way, some minor and probably well motivated but unthinking.

We have serious financial problems. We can't do all the xeroxing necessary. I may have overcome some of this yesterday. I'm working with some college people but the separation is of 120 miles in travel time and much greater in knowledge and understanding. If they can come through I'll have other copies for you soon. Jim has only parts of mornings away from home. He has to babysit afternoons. But even the time it takes him to go for xeroxing comes from other work he can't do. He is not close to any xeroxing facilities except where the cost is quite high. And then the lawyer has to be his own clerk-secretary.

Unless I can get away today I'll not be able to re-mail your note of the 4th to him until tomorrow. Not knowing whether you sent him the attached list of documents, which is quite helpful, I'll make a copy of it and send it, too. It would have been much better if you had sent this (these) directly to him. We have time pressures and each little bit added to our potential undershading means the possibility of more time being required.

I hope you are right that Lifton will not do anything stupid. We are being haunted now by another non-stupidity of the past. If anything is done publicly or in any way that gets back to the other side it will not be helpful and can hurt as he may not see. The realities today have nothing to do with figures insofar as our situation is concerned.

It was good of you to take the time to include descriptions but from them I can't tell which I have and don't have. Some do seem unfamiliar. I do not have all that the Archives finally sent Jim so I can't say if they were complete. This can be very helpful that way. I wish we'd had it earlier. but I think Jim can still use it before the next hearing, which may be the determining moment.

Your letter to Shea helps make a record.

Glad to get the Bud/Zodiac story. Bud denies having identified this character but he told Turner it is one Devereaux. The chances of this whole business being completely insane are high.

I was confident you would take a different approach with Crossland than I did. That you did is quite good. It helps give them a broader view. It is also a good approach. By and large I am in complete agreement with what you say. There are differences, as in your (5):

"...this strong prima facie evidence against a shot from the rear was...."
It is not this kind of evidence but is of a shot from the front. The two are not the same.

"The single bullet theory is not quite as absurd as it can easily be made to appear." Wrong. It cannot be more absurd on the basis of fact. And injecting Wecht into Congressional consideration is to invite disaster. He has added nothing to what Sylvia and I published long ago except error and to what was available without him elsewhere and from official sources.

"...the FBI's files on Oswald were never given to the Commission..." Wrong again. The Commission actually refused them.

My purpose here is not complaint. And one such error can be a disaster to a Member of either House.

This is a different field than scholarship, where errors mean very little. Even simple misdirection can be ruinous to people who have to live with the realities that obtain on the Hill and in political life and in re-elections and with the kinds of constituents the wealthier ones generally are.

Things work a different way on the Hill. Life is entirely different, in ways not readily apparent to those not experienced in it. Downing has already gotten considerable flack from sources he can't stand it from. If Hughes has no more than a defeated Sandman back home he has too much trouble behind him to face more on the floor of the Congress, in a committee or anywhere else.

The difference between the FBI's not giving the file and the Commission's not wanting it may seem slight to you. But it can be major for Hughes. However, I've taken and will take no initiatives there. He approached me first and I've never written him. I've responded to him. He has called. This is a small example of one of the reasons. We can't make things more difficult for them and I'm not about to start campaigning against the well-organized nuts and self-seekers. Of those I've met in this part there is only one with whom I will take any initiative. If and when I do it will be in other directions.

The position paper I gave them was almost entirely devoted to this problem and how they can meet them. They saw the major one immediately and when Jim and I had a meeting with some of them 5/21 they took the initial steps to rectify it. I assured them there was no question of factual foundation for what I said is the only possible approach. (Even Lane has come to realize this and that idea also he has stolen. All he had to do is hear me say it. His ignorance of the most basic fact continues to astound.) I said that I'd show them enough fact any time they wanted. Several spent about six hours here their first free day and left satisfied on this.

So, I tell you still again the situation is political, not factual, legal or judicial. All the other prerequisites we meet with ease. If we all tend to shun what is foreign to our training and life experiences and thus it is natural for you and others not to see this, for whatever little my assurances to you can mean these are my assurances. With Congress, in court, with the press-everywhere. Even with our own and not inconsiderable liabilities.

I've taken this hour and a half before breakfast in an effort to inform you, not for other purposes. I hope you will try to see if you can see what I'm trying to get you to see. Thanks for what you sent.

Sincerely,

Dear ~~Harold~~ Harold,

e 4, 1975

Thanks for your letter on the 29th.. I don't ~~xxx~~ think there is anything I can do to help with the spectro unless I have the actual data, and even then I might not be able to come up with ~~xxxx~~ anything new. I think the problem will be to separate ~~xxx~~ any really significant fudging from what I expect will be a number of routine errors, flaws, and FBI games. I haven't talked with Lifton for a couple of weeks, but I don't think he is going to do anything stupid with this material. I'll pass on your concerns when I get the chance.

I'm enclosing a ~~xxxxxx~~ list of documents I know of which relate to the spectro and NAA; my 5/31 letter to the Justice Department, to indicate the status of my requests for the Oswald ~~xxx~~ files; the Zodiac dispatch of 5/28, re the ~~xxxxxxx~~ unidentified man photo; my letter of Crossland.(Thanks for giving him my name.) Also, a copy of this letter for Jim.

Best,

Paul

PLH

Mar 18	JLK	JEN	XXXXXXXX		
			#F.12		
Apr 2	JEH	JLR	CE 2561	1	Paraffin tests, rifle (unreliable) [Ref: 3/30 discussion with MAE]
Jul 2	NR	AWD	Will get	1	NAA; Dulles' proposed Readers Digest article
Jul 8	JEH	JLR	#13X.21	1	Spectro; minor differences found [This is the letter Wecht quotes in full]

Misc. comments on Wecht article (Modern Medicine, 10/28/74):

The 7/8/64 letter, at least, was not released after Wecht's article. I saw it in May 1970 and got a copy in June 1970.

I don't have the For. Sci. article in Ref. 1. Presumably it is the same as the Wecht-Smith article in the For. Sci. Gazette.

Without going back to check the details, I would expect that the WC's confusion at the 1/27 session about the medical evidence does not require a second autopsy report, ~~my~~ but might be due to the old problem of the FBI Summary and Supplemental reports not taking note of the autopsy report results. That may have meant that the FBI didn't believe ~~xxx~~ the autopsy.

On-Hand and Referred-to Records re Spectro, NAA, and possibly related matters

JLHW

(Based on a fairly quick check of my on-hand list)

PLH x 3/9/75

Jan 10	JEH to JLR	Will Get		Arrangements with AEC for NAA
Feb 4	R/CNS JEH	H.47	3 pp.	Basis for ballistics identification in CD 5
Feb 7	JEH to JLR	D.6	2 pp.	Basis for firearms ident. [Reply to 2/4 ltr]
Feb 12	R/HPW JEH	DLA.20	2	Wants more detail, firearms ident. [Ref. to 2/7]
Feb 18	JEH to JLR	Will get		More details on firearms ident. [Ref x in 2/24] [This is CD 383, 1&3&5 pp; have on APK film]
Feb 24	R/HPW JEH	DLA.21	1	Thanks for 2/18 ltr, firearms ident.
Mar 4	MAE JLR	Will get	4	Ballistics identification
Mar 10	JEH JLR	CE 2455	2	[25H604] NAA on paraffin casts [This refers to the Jan 10 letter]
Mar 11	JEH JLR	Will get	1	JFK ballistics [cartridge clip &c]
Mar 13	JEH JLR	423.3	1	Independent examination of firearms [Refers to a 3/12 discussion with MAE]
Mar 18	JEH JLR	20H1-2	2	Misc. MAE questions from 3/16 discussion
		[Gallagher Ex. 1]		[Possibility of NAA on coat hole discussed]
Mar 24	JEH JLR	#13X.9	1	Lead in car-spectro [Reply to 3/18 ltr]
Mar 18	JLR JEH	Will get	1	Wants info re exam of car, description of scene
		#F.12		
Apr 2	JEH JLR	CE 2561	1	Paraffin tests, rifle (unreliable) [Ref: 3/30 discussion with MAE]
Jul 2	NR AWD	Will get	1	NAA; Dulles' proposed Readers Digest article
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