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The Fort Worth Press



FOUR BUILDING
FORT WORTH, TEXAS

June 22, 1942

Lee Oswald,

Peter Gregory gave me permission to leave this letter with him in his office. If you should return, he kindly consented to give it to you.

As I'm sure you know by now, I would like to talk with you. It is not my intent to stir the embers of your personal controversy or to subject you to ridicule. I do not pretend, either, to offer exoneration for what you did, because I do not know why you did it or how you feel.

But whatever your reason for defecting, I think people can be made to understand it. It seems apparent that your reason for leaving me longer outweighs your desire to live in America.

You would be surprised how many people still link the name Lee Oswald with "traitor" and "turncoat." You will find in your search for employment that those who don't remember the name nevertheless will think of some excuse for not hiring you when they learn your background.

Personally, I do not condemn blindly. And I do not believe in trial by newspaper. I do believe that where sympathy ends, understanding falters.

You are 22, married to a cute girl and have a small child. You come from the plain vanilla strain of people. You are idealistic, want to express yourself, maybe write.

I am 34, married to a cute girl and have a small child. I come from the plain vanilla strain of people. I am idealistic (two years out of college) and am a writer.

We are brothers under the skin. To say you are a traitor would be a terrific blow to my own pride. I believe you are a man of convictions. But I don't know for sure, because I have not been offered a chance even to shake your hand.

Please talk with me, on the phone, in person, at your house or at mine—just talk. Not to give me a chance to take quick notes and write a hurried news story—just to talk. I could help you in something any writing you might be working on. As a free-lance writer myself, I happen to know that selling words is like selling anything else! The buyer needs to be teased with a wee taste first. With a "taste" for Scripps-Howard's 21 papers, the full meal could well turn out to be a story in a national magazine, even a book and possibly a ~~profit~~

Richard L. Fort