

Rec'd
4/29/71

April 19, 1971

Dear Arch:

Couldn't you have chosen a little less sneaky and shocking way of avoiding a long trip?

The trip was wonderful and I feel that you would have been even more pleased with it than I was, since you always seem to look at all the good things and avoid thinking of the petty grievances. The end of the trip was the best part--when I learned you are on your way to complete recovery. The biggest "damper" on the whole weekend was the concern for our dear friend and colleague, Arch Kimbrough.

Of course, I'll be thinking of things I want to tell you about the weekend from now on-- but, I'll try to give you highlights now.

I got to Washington Friday evening at 9:03 p.m. As instructed, I called Bud's home in Arlington to learn where my reservations were. Patty's son, Pat, was the only one home, and he told me to take a cab and come on to Arlington. I did that. About 10 minutes after I arrived, Bud, Patty and John Henry Faulk arrived. They had been at the airport trying to find me. They had tried American, United and Continental-- of course, I went Braniff.

Faulk is the man who fought, in the courts, for so many years over his being "blacklisted" by someone (I never did get it quite straight) but he eventually won the case. He wrote Fear on Trial about his problems. I vaguely remember the case. Bud was his first lawyer, but they called in Louie Nizer.

Faulk is one of the "things" you and I would probably have disagreed over. I'm not sure I like him at all. He vacillates between very sophisticated, urbane, intellectual discourses on politics, etc., and a sort of corny, crude attempt to "poke fun" at Texas, Lyndon and the South. He had spent the ~~xx~~ evening before (Thursday) with John and Nelly Connally. He seems to know all the "right people."

Although we were up quite late Friday evening (Saturday morning), Bud and I left quietly early Saturday morning for the office. I did not take anything but a notebook with me to the office (a stenographer's notebook), since I didn't want to be pressured, in the event I didn't like the looks of things. I had chosen an old battered suitcase (at my daughter's suggestion) to lock all of your notebooks, the police log, the police cards, and the telephone index into. Carol Anne suggested that if you lock a good looking bag, they are quite likely to see that it is damaged and opened to see if it contains valuables. I didn't lock the bag containing my one dress... (Everything made the trip there and back safely.)

I'll give you the list of all those who attended the meeting, and the little bit I know about them:

Bud Fensterwald -

Ken Smith (as a visitor) - You and I met Ken when we were in D. C. in 1969. He is the former Treasury Agent (Alcohol and Tax Division) who went to interview Jack Lawrence in West Virginia and was so frightened while there.

Hal Dorland - A very nice looking young man (probably 35) formerly with the State Department, now a law student

in Washington. I think he will be quite an asset to the group. Level headed, intelligent, etc...

Jim Lesar - A young lawyer (probably a genius). His father is Dean of the Law School at Washington University in St. Louis. He is married to a Chinese woman who is a medical doctor at Georgetown Hospital. Jim really knows the "case." I liked him very much. He resents the fact that we refer to the three men being escorted by the police in Sprague's pictures as "tramps." Jim says he has never dressed that well in his life and no one has ever called him a "tramp."

John Henry Faulk -

Fred Cook - Author of The FBI Nobody Knows. Cook was one of the two men there I was most impressed with. He is a liberal, anti-establishment writer in his early sixties (looks about 40). Humorous, dignified, fine looking -- a true gentleman. His wife was in D. C. with him, but was ill and we never met her.

Dick Sprague - He had Gloria and their four children with him. He is currently unemployed and quite distressed over his prospects for future employment at the kind of salary he demands. Gloria was radiant and I am not stretching the truth to say she was extremely attractive. I only saw her at the party on Saturday night at Bud's home, but it was hard to believe she was the same person I'd met in Dallas a couple of years ago. I never saw the four children. They stayed at the hotel and watched TV.

Bob Smith - I like this man better and better...

Mary Ferrell - (A questionable asset to the group)

Fletcher Prouty - By far the most impressive of the lot.

This man is now a vice-president of Madison National Bank. For many years, he was with the government. Worked closely with the State Department, Secret Service, CIA, Justice Department. A quiet, unassuming, handsome man, in his late fifties or early sixties. He came up with some remarkable suggestions for solving problems of the committee (particularly regarding raising money for the Committee's work. Usually such suggestions border on "schemes" or unethical propositions, but his suggestions were very practical and completely workable.) He has always been interested in the "case" but is only now reading documents, etc. I know you would have liked him. I met his wife at the party Saturday night. They have several children (one boy is in Vanderbilt). They had lived in Dallas for a short period of time about 20 or 25 years ago when he was working with the Government at Love Field.

The last of the lot was Dick Billings - former Life writer who now publishes Congressional Quarterly. Dick is a rather cynical, fortyish, young man who is quite knowledgeable about the case but has just a bit of an attitude of "So what! You can't do anything." However,

Bud was very encouraged because the meeting went so well and Dick seemed enthusiastic and ready to try again. It seems Life let him go because of his attitude about the John F. Kennedy assassination. Dick didn't come to the party Saturday night because he is recently divorced and had his child for the weekend.

Paris Flammonde and Bill Turner were supposed to be there but didn't come. No one seemed to know what happened to Paris, but Turner had called to say he couldn't afford the bus fare from San Francisco to Los Angeles, and would be unable to attend. Popkin will be in D.C. next week and will get a run-down on what went on. He remains a member of the Board. He had tried to rearrange his schedule to be present but was unable to do so.

The meeting started on time and held fairly closely to the Agenda. (A copy of all the papers we received at the meeting is enclosed.)

The first item on the Agenda brought out the fact that they had not invited Jim Garrison to the meeting. Several there expressed the opinion that the most static they have received over the work of the Committee has been that Garrison was a part of it. They voted to drop him completely.

II(c) brought out the fact that they have three separate computer programming projects going. All sounded interesting. One that Berkeley is working on reveals that one person was definitely connected with both Ruby and Oswald. I asked if they knew whether

or not it was Krystinik but nobody seemed to know. They promised they would determine which person it was and let me know.

When we reached III on the Agenda, I brought out the letter from Mrs. Bradshaw. Everyone read it and there was a great deal of discussion about it. A few felt it was the ideal place for the material and a couple seemed to feel it was the worst possible place for it. They have been thinking about university libraries (particularly those that might give large sums for the continuing work of the Committee). They did agree to consider it very carefully and agreed to help us build up "our depository" in the Dallas Public Library even if they choose the library at the University of Wisconsin (which seems to have nibbled at their offer.)

Item VIII was completely discarded, primarily at the suggestion of Fletcher Prouty and Dick Billings. They said it was beneath the dignity of the Committee we are trying to establish and maintain. I agreed...

At 2:00 p.m., Carmen, Bud's secretary, who is from the Philippines, brought in hot food and served lunhh. She had cooked quite a variety of Chinese food. I have never seen anything like it. We ate around the tables in the conference room and chatted informally.

We resumed the meeting after lunch.

Bud and I went back to his home from the meeting and about 7 p.m. the guests began arriving for the party. Harold and Lil Weisberg, the wife of Fletcher Prouty, Ken Smith's wife, Bob Smith's sister, Helen Cochran (very charming), a Washington dentist--

Dr. Stone and his wife, next-door neighbors of Bud and Patty's, and many others came to the party. They had a concert pianist who was really great, and later on there was dancing and a kind of floor show...

We had a wonderful dinner, cooked by Patty, and a good time was had by all.

The last to leave, naturally, were Harold and Lil. We were still ~~talking~~ talking at 3:00 a.m., Sunday morning.

Bud and I got up at about 6 Sunday morning and took my big, battered suitcase and went down to his office. Bob Smith and Jim Lesar took the things I didn't mind them copying (police logs, cards, telephone index, etc.) and went to the old office. Bud and I worked on all the notebooks. It was a slow process because I examined every page. Where we had APK Wild Theory, etc., or MEF says, etc., I either refused to let him copy (if the page was principally theory) or I placed white paper over the objectionable sentences or paragraphs and let Bud copy the page. We worked all day.

~~xxxx~~ Fred Cook joined us about 11 a.m. and sat down and talked to Bud while we worked. Fred Cook is writing an article on the Committee's objectives for the Nation.

I can assure you that Bob Smith, Jim Lesar and Bud all felt that the copying job on Sunday was the highlight of the entire weekend for them.

I took the tapes of Channels 1 and 2 and they also made copies of those on Sunday.

Bud took me straight from the office to the plane. I forget

to say that Bud, Fred Cook, Jim Lesar, Patty Fensterwald and I had lunch Sunday afternoon at a little sidewalk cafe and then went back to work at the copying job. (I had again locked the suitcase while we were at lunch.)

When I got home last night, I barely got in the door when I called to see how you were. When Lucy and Ann assured me you were fine, the weekend became a success. Just get well and you and I will definitely solve the assassination puzzles.

Love,

Mary Elizabeth

P.S. I'm sure you'd rather hear, "We solved it!" than the bit of news I'm going to give you, but I just want you to know that your madd, Florence, literally worships you (she's been pretty patient with me, too... I called her fifty times a day.) Once we knew you were going to get well, she said, "Laggy, how I has prayed for that white man!" Confidentially, I don't know of any Black Muslims who were offering up prayers, but you sure had a bunch of denominations working overtime on their knees...