

25 December 1968

Dear Helen Hartmann:

Thank you for your letter of the 17th and for the recent note and sample of Horsey's handwriting which, I quite agree, is identical to the handwriting of Dr. John Smith, D.O. As I recall the Smith letter was post-marked Houston and was mailed at least ten days after the date on the letter itself.

Once again, I wish to state (this time for the record) that I do not think I said anything to Horsey which would have given him the impression that I wrote to Dr. Smith and received a reply -- so he is apparently a VERY good actor. (I would rule out a split personality on the grounds that such cases as dramatized in THE THREE FACES OF EVE are said to be extremely rare -- like about a dozen documented cases in the history of psychology.) Again, what happened is that I got the Smith letter out of the blue, after I had politely informed Horsey over the phone that I wanted nothing to do with him because I did not trust him, some weeks earlier. The Smith letter was such an exaggerated diatribe in praise of the unlimited virtues of Ed Horsey that it seemed to me rather out of the question that he could have written it himself -- for that would have required either a fantastic sense of humor (and Horsey seems humorless) or astonishing audacity. (I now give him credit (?) for the latter.) So I wrote to "Smith" and told him I was sorry for my suspicion of Horsey and would be glad to meet with him, as originally appointed, at some future date. Horsey then called me, either late last month or early this month, and said words to the effect of, "Smith contacted me about your letter to him," and went on from there into a list of names, none of which I could identify. This was followed by a couple of other calls -- some of which were intended to urge me to appear on the Ruark show, which was against my inclination. Finally he called me at home during the show and I consented to say a few words in support of a Congressional investigation -- and then got asked about a number of things I did not especially care to discuss, so I tried to answer as briefly and colorlessly as possible.

During his recent spate of calls to me, Horsey repeated and enlarged upon his earlier warnings to me against associating with you (offering, as you know, to prove some of his charges -- which he said you would deny -- with a tape). He went on to say that you would be contacting me in the near future and I should be on my guard, as you would be laboring on behalf of Harold Wildgoose. He also appeared to be representing Vincint Salandria and asked me, among other things, if I would agree to meet with Vince if he came down here. I said I would, provided the meeting was in the office of my attorney. Horsey said that would be fine with Vince. Horsey has always represented himself to me as someone working with Vincint Salandria (more about which in a few paragraphs).

Now I would like to get on record the recent excitement around our house, as I am sending a copy of this ~~letter~~ letter to Sylvia and another to David Lifton and, further, I want to state in exact detail what I over-simplified on the phone during my conversations with you out of a desire to avoid lengthy side trips at long-distance rates.

At midnight of Friday, 20 December 1968, Cara opened the door to see if any of the cats wanted in before we retired. She heard a loud sound in the driveway, about 25 feet from our door, and looked over to see a person -- dressed in dark clothing -- rushing out the drive toward the street. He had apparently stumbled over either the trash cans or an oil drum, she is not sure which -- and this was the cause of the noise. Her view of the prowler was blocked almost immediately and his escape took him down the driveway and thus behind the landlord's house which is in front of ours.

I hurriedly put on a pair of trousers and ran, barefoot, down the driveway to the street. I saw no one, but meanwhile Cara heard footfalls indicating that someone was walking rapidly up toward Eiberon, which crosses Marlin at the nearest corner, one house away. Meanwhile, I heard a noise in a large tree out front and thought it might be the prowler. I retreated quickly to the end of the driveway near our house and called to Cara, instructing her to call the police. She did so while I kept an eye on the tree.

Mr. Hersey's recent sinister activities on my "behalf" were very much on my mind that night and I was just wondering if he was not attempting to incriminate me with the Florida authorities very much as Weisberg did with Garrison, in order -- this time -- to produce cause for a warrant to be issued for the search of my home. (I read recently the Kirkwood piece in ESQUIRE's December issue on Clay Shaw, and how his home was searched and his property confiscated.) Whenever I get on a paranoid trip like this I find it helps to share it, so Cara and I had been sitting on the sofa quietly discussing this possibility -- after which we took a shower, and as we were drying off we were joking loudly back and forth about how it would blow Garrison's mind if he DID obtain my personal belongings and start reading some of the screwball letters my friends and I fire back and forth.

So the thought that the prowler might be Hersey or someone associated with him or Garrison was more prominent in my thinking than it would otherwise have been -- while, for example, the thought that there was no curtain on our rather high bathroom window (because I'd taken it down after accidentally bending the rod that afternoon) did not even cross my mind.

Anyhow, I knew my attorney would want on the police records any suspected illegal shenanigans relative to my court case -- so even after Cara told me about the footfalls and we decided there was no one in the tree, I spoke to the police when they arrived -- reenacting, more or less, what had happened, and telling them that I was a suspect in the Garrison probe and thought it might be a certain crackpot amateur detective from Michigan who visited St. Pete periodically. The police, strangely, did not ask me his name and so I did not volunteer it.

The next morning I called you the first time -- then I hoped on my bike to go to work and as I swung into the driveway noticed a car (white, late model) passing the front of our driveway very slowly and the driver seemed to be staring intently back toward our house. He had on sun glasses, looked about 30, was clean cut, and had, I would say, brown hair. The car pulled away, but I peddled out behind it and committed the [redacted] license number (TEXAS plate: GLZ-194) to memory.

As soon as I got to work, I decided to go home and call the police, so they could add this information to the report of the night before. But they insisted on sending an officer by to take the information. So I waited around the house until he pulled up.

This guy was stupid. I did not realize it at first. I explained to him the circumstances, physical and political. I'd had no trouble communicating with the officers the night before (as far as I know) and he gave no indication of not understanding. He went back to his car and talked on the police radio, and then he asked if he could use my phone. I said fine.

He sat down and dialed information and asked for the number of the FBI. I said, "You can't call the FBI!" He said, "Oh yes -- it's an inter-state thing and has to do with a Federal investigation. I have to call the FBI." I said, "Look, you drag the FBI into this thing and you'll get me convicted for sure. Besides, the FBI won't want to have a [redacted] goddamned thing to do with it -- I'm sure." He then gave me that Suspicious Cop look and slowly and deliberately dialed the number. "Hello, this is Sgt. Dumbdong, Tampa Police -- and I have a man here who was convicted in the Kennedy assassination..." And I interject, "NOT convicted, charged with perjury -- and not the Kennedy assassination, THE GARRISON PROBE." Well, as I am saying this, the cop is looking up at me and asking me what my first name is. He then says into the phone -- so help, so help me, so help me God -- "His name is Thornley...Garrison...Probe...Thornley."

At this point I became bold and said something to the effect of "Sweet-Jesus-Christ-give-me-that-phone" and said to the FBI: "Look, this is Kerry Thornley. I'm a suspect in the Garrison probe. Last night we had a [redacted] prowler and this morning someone appeared to be watching our house from a car and I think this has to do with Garrison or one of his followers and I want as little to do with you people as possible and I'm sure you feel exactly the same way about me." The FBI said, "That's exactly right, sir, and thank you for calling."

Then I got on my bike and headed for work, after showing the cop out -- and mumbling some anarchist slogans that I'm quite confident were far, far over his head. No sooner do I round the corner of Elbaron on my little [redacted] bicycle than I see a blue car with a Michigan license plate (which fitted your description of Mr. Horsey's car) parked in the yard of a local rooming or apt. house. Quickly, absurdly, I peddle back to the cop and inform him of this -- and then go to work, wherefrom I decide to make a second call to you, after passing yet ANOTHER blue car with a Michigan license plate parked farther up the street. (Since then I have noticed that there are NUMEROUS out-of-state cars around here at this time of year.) The plate number of the first Michigan car (a Comet, which was still there yesterday) is: YG 4990. That of the second car, a blacktop convertible Olds is: FF 0824. (The name on the mailbox at this second rooming house is, interestingly, R.E. Bradley!) I now think the two Michigan autos are co-incidence -- but I'm still very suspicious (and would be if nothing else had happened) about the Texas car.

Later I drove by the first Mich. car on my bike to stop when I saw an [redacted] interesting looking mime'd sheet on the ground. It was a "hot sheet" -- the officer had been checking to see if it was a stolen car! Political criminals are really essentially helpless. Damned if they don't and damned if they do.

attorney

My attorney assured me, in a second conversation, that he will check out Ed Horsey's association with Galber. Levine happens to have an old and close friend in Galber's office. So I think we can get to the bottom of this, if there is any, soon.

But don't go away yet. This morning I got an air-mail special del. letter from Lipton (the body of which I will Xerox and send to you and Sylvia at my first opportunity) in which he informs me that he has heard directly from Vincent Salandria to the effect that Horsey has been calling HIM on my "behalf" -- and Salandria added, matter of factly, that Horsey was AUTHORIZED TO COLLECT FUNDS for me and had solicited Salandria with the allegation that he had also collected such for me, apparently, from Sylvia Meagher and Tink Thompson!

Besides which, Salandria claims to have gotten two weird phone calls WHILE HE WAS IN GARRISON'S OFFICE recently. One requesting him, shades of Dana Andrews, to fly out to the West Coast and represent Thornhill -- and the other from a person HE THOUGHT WAS LIPTON, asking him to TAKE MY CASE in exchange for info. on the States Rights Party. Later Vince learned that Horsey had called his home when he was in New Orleans, to ask if he was out of town. Salandria says he now thinks the "call from Lipton" was from Horsey.

Once again, Horsey has been giving me every reason to think that he has been working closely "with Vince" on critical research -- and has also gone to great lengths to assure me that Salandria was having nothing whatever to do with Weisberg these days and has relayed various messages to me from Salandria, supposedly. During one of my first talks with Horsey I asked him, as a matter of his opinion, whether Salandria might eventually be interested in advising me [redacted] regarding a proposed suit against the Federal Government for issuing the Warren Report, the numerous faults of which led indirectly to my arrest in the probe. I specifically requested him, at one point, not to bring this up with Salandria at this time. Apparently "misunderstanding" me, he claimed to have done so anyhow (during one of our early conversations) and added that Vince was not interested except as an "indirect advisor." I immediately told him to drop the whole matter, stressing that I did not want to deal with Salandria in any such way so long as he was supporting Garrison.

Dave has requested me to publically disassociate myself from Horsey and I think that, since he is "collecting funds" for me, I must. This does not of course mean that you must confront him with anything -- and when and if I confront him, when and if he calls, I will stick to the Salandria business as grounds for my ire.

It has also occurred to me that he will probably contact those who sent letters to their legislators from this area c/o Dr. Smith, trying to enlist them in his whatever. I would appreciate Ruark's co-operation in contacting some of these people, privately or over the air, and find out what, if anything, he has said or written to them.

I still believe I have ample reason for concluding that Horsey is connected with Mark Lane -- and will present my case for this in a future [redacted] communique. I do not think he is just a loose nut in the machinery by any means -- if for no other reason than his apparently limitless expense account, not to mention his intimate knowledge of my Grand Jury testimony (which he claimed was quoted in Mark Lane's book and then later said came from Mark Lane directly with the comment that it was in his book, A CITIZEN'S DISSERT) given in sworn secrecy, and finally for his recent "information" to me that he was planning to go to New Orleans and work there for while on "a consulting basis" for some company which he did not name.

Some material is enclosed, Helen, I thought you would like.