

12/16/68

Dear Steve,

Your check and brief note arrived today. You seem to have ignored my letter, with other possible charges. Can you please address yourself to this?

The device did await me in New Orleans. Louis had opened it and thrown the insurance record away. This is unfortunate, for it did not work at all and I could not use it. Boy, did I need it! Too bad, through no one's fault. I left it there for repair. It was properly packaged, too. The day I left I was given the newer version of the same thing. Brand new. Also inoperative!

We have just avoided a major disaster the details of which I cannot now communicate to you. Maggie has a pretty good, if incomplete, idea of what was going on. With the best of intent, you out there were part of it. Some of you may have had other intent, as Vince Salondria seems convinced (I am not). Regardless of intent, the fact is beyond doubt. If the investigation is not already wrecked beyond hope it is close to that point. All the stuff you all were so busily engaged in was diversionary, having nothing to do with the case and probably in only a very few instances with anything. All of this enormous effort, the great expenditure of time and resources, was denied the Shaw case, which now thereby suffers greatly.

Now there is nothing we can do about this. Jim must be deeply hurt by all of it, and I avoided any mention of this to him when I was there, as I presume others also did. I have reason to believe everyone cushioned his feelings.

What can still be done should be, as thoroughly and rapidly as possible. One of these things I have already asked you for. It is a complete memo on "The Plot", "Hepburn" and everything that relates, especially all those people you saw, what they said, their appearances, apparent connections, addresses - everything. I cannot tell you why now, but your last letter indicates a sufficient awareness of what could be here involved. Do not tell Jaffe, for he is too deeply involved, too close to Camerre, and has the worst judgement in the world. He'll blab. This is not whim, please believe me, for I have already been able to establish certain connections beyond any question at all.

If you have any doubts about this, please consult with Maggie immediately. If you do not do this, without telegraphing to anyone at all aside from her, the prospects of your not deeply regretting it are slim. And I will hunt you.

There is one other thing you should do. If it was not asked of you it was to have been. You should immediately return your credentials to Jim with a nice note saying you do it to avoid any possibility of embarrassing him, that it does not mean you will not continue to do whatever you can, etc. You need them only for your vanity, not for work. There should be none in any unofficial hands, for the embarrassment already happened, and there will be more. Again, if you have any question, speak to Maggie. Jaffe had already agreed it was the wisest thing to do when Vince so brutally ~~attacked~~ and wrongly attacked him. I do not believe what Vince said and we had it hot and heavy over that incident. However, I must acknowledge the effect is the same. In addition, he turned up a tremendous amount of money that could have been used for worthwhile purposes.

I expect to return to N.O. before the trial and I do expect the trial to come off close to schedule this time. I do not look forward to it.

Sincerely,