

12/2/68

Dear Maggie,

Thank you very much for calling back. I do think it important that Vince and/or I get, as soon as possible, the entire history on Hepburn and the book and movie (and people involved), and anything at all that might be suspicious about Turner, Boxley, "Rose" and Tom Bethell. I think it is possible that for several fortunate accident, the kind of perlay we can never again either figure on or hope to win, all might by now have been ruined. And I do not yet know all the details.

Vince came through magnificently when I called upon him, maintaining a cool I could not have and apparently saying just the right thing. Because I knew I could depend upon him, I was able to lay the right foundation for his cell and have the right thing done on the spot. The wonder - and the major change - is that this was and could be done locally. By the time we meet again and can speak freely, I'll have pretty much the whole thing and will tell you what we just escaped.

Vince and I are not in entire accord, but that is not important. To him there is the conviction Turner and Boxley are conscious agents. I am not at all sure of this, but to me the important thing is not what they are but what they do, its effect. I think it is better that we have all the different flowers.

While it is possible there is much I do not know, on the basis of what I do, I tell you there is nothing that stacks up that T and B have taken to Jim. That is, nothing of their own. They have taken some of the work of others as their own, one of the things that aroused my suspicions.

I have an additional problem with Turner. He has been incompetent in those things he has done of which I have knowledge, and not honest. When you and Bill called upon him for help with Dean, he got nothing you didn't, from what Bill told me, and he not only failed to let me know what he got, he refused to, which was less than honest, since I had turned Dean on and then turned him over. When I was again in California I again turned him on and learned there was much more he knew - and I did get it, with no difficulty, no special skills or techniques. Recently Sciambra called upon him for what I had outlined to Moo in asking him to locate someone by phone. Because Jim himself is the biggest problem and because the office is not at all secure, I could not tell Moo what I had already accomplished. I told him only that Johann Rush had still pictures from his movies of Oswald's literature distribution made for the FBI and we ought to see if he had prints, that he had moved to California, and his parents names and addresses. I then went off to Texas, expecting to hear from Moo when he had gotten Johann's phone number. He had said that he or I would have to fly out for this, that there was no one else who could be trusted(!). Instead he phoned me in Dallas four days later to tell me nothing about this but that perhaps they had something not less than a major sensation he wanted me to be in on and would I go back. I thanked him, for this is the first such courtesy I have ever been offered, but declined, for I have more work to do than I can make seem real and I was not well. After that night Jim phoned me and asked me to come back to share a major breakthrough. I then did, and the Great Man kept me waiting - and wasting - an entire day. This "breakthrough" was Turner's failure. Moo had called him, told him about Johann, Turner had gotten a remote generation copy of the film and had flown with it to New Orleans. I had had a second-generation copy for some time. In fact, it was then being processed into stills from a second copy I had. Turner got only the movie, no stills, no word of stills, nothing at all of the photographers recollections or story. In short, nothing. Then when I got home I had to start from scratch. I phoned Paul Hoch, who has done magnificent work on this (and many other) aspect. Paul has never conducted an

interview in his life and was full of misgivings. "He is a great young man, Meggie. I got him to connect his tape recorder and gave him what I would have asked Johann. I told him above all, just get him talking, take your time, let him recall what he does not what you want him to. Hal Verb could not be there. He has had such experience. Well, Paul, the graduate student who is shy and has never done such a thing in his life did what the great former FBI agent didn't. In fact, the major remaining problem was put straight by Rush: he now has trouble distinguishing in his mind what he remembers and what Turner told him, Turner having spent all his time telling Rush what a great FBI agent he had been (and impressing him no end) and what happened in New Orleans, of which he had honestly told me he knew nothing! I had consulted with him before phoning Paul so there would be no trouble on that score. "Owing he knew nothing at all about it, he readily agreed that I have Paul do this. This is a perhaps minor thing, but to me it is not. It says he is at best ~~is~~ incompetent.

"He lied to me about Rose, who I have suspected from the first. "He has not made it possible for me to check Rose out, something he immediately knew I wanted to do - and he should have on his own but didn't.

With Bethell it may also be a combination of indifference and incompetence. I talked him into coming to Washington and working in the Archives, and I left him alone there, giving up my own work, once I learned of the FBI's interest in him. I turned things over to him and thereafter never heard a word about them. I got not a single thing from him, not even responses on declassified files I asked him to check for me. I have a major hunk of one in COUP D'ETAT. It is that important. Yet he got nothing from it. "He has been working with Lifton, according to Lifton. I expect him to come out on the other side, have so informed the office - a long time ago, and not for whom but on what he has been saying to people I have long known - ~~is~~ and he is still there, ~~is~~ if only two days a week.

Boxley is more complex. He, too, is a professional, and Jim respects and is impressed by this. What he has done except spend money extravagantly I do not know. I have seen nothing but poppycock. I do know when I took him out on one of the very obvious local investigations that should have been made, and I was aghast to learn it hadn't been, and got exactly what we needed, he quite forcefully disputed what I had been told. I got from Douglas Jones, of the Jones Printing Co., the statement that it definitely was not Oswald who got the leaflet printed. I also got from him an opinion of who it seemed to have been. I gave him a hundred pictures to go through, and there were two or three pictures of one young man of some interest to us in which he looked different in each. Jones picked out each picture of this man as the one most closely resembling the man who got the handbills. Back at the office Boxley hotly disputed this. Well, I had made a clandestine recording. So, I got it out, played it back, and gave it to Lou Ivon. With all the things that have been happening, including to tapes I have given the office, I asked for this ~~one~~ before I got there. When they could not find it, I asked Moo to set up an appointment with Jones again while I did other work. We went out and got him and Myra Silvers together. Went through the whole thing, after 10 months lapse. And, independently, both say it was not Oswald - she said she had never seen the man whose picture we showed her - Oswald's arrest picture - and each, separately, picked out the same two different pictures - of Kerry Wendell Thornley! Please keep this entirely to yourself. I kept the tape I made this time. I have now dubbed it and will give it to them. But even these simple things I have to do, cannot trust them to. I do let Lou Ivon, who I like very much and do trust, know what I am doing and what I have. In order not to turn him off to begin with, I told him I had to have an arrangement with him that would end the nonstop thievery of my material. "He knew about it and agreed. "It was only after gaining his confidence that I risked telling him my other apprehensions, only to find out he shared them. So, although I have had to stop sending them copies of everything I got, I did let him know. He knew I had the NBC film, but it never dawned on Moo to check with Lou before this enormous waste of time and money.

Boxley has been working in Texas. He is a Texan. He is an "expert". Almost a year ago I suggested he speak to a man who is very important with a very important man I cannot now otherwise identify, a man I had hoped to see and who I could, with the help I was authorized to use. My problem was getting to Texas, not being able to buy the ticket. He saw the man and got nothing. Well, part of the application of intellectual judo I referred to on the phone was to get me to Texas. There was a ticket waiting for me at the Delta counter as soon as I made a phone call. There would have been a hotel room and a chauffeur had I so desired. I saw this man less than I could have simply because there were so many things to be done there that no one had ever done - and believe me, this includes Mark, for all his touted work there. From this man I got Jack Ruby's notes to his lawyer (again a very big SH!) and I now have a very good relationship. Unless somebody louses it up. In four days and nights, one of which was wasted waiting for Jim to call me when he said he would, among the things I did was radio and TV, find and interview Father Mechann, interview Zapruder, Dr. Perry (who does not realize what he told me, but Penn, who was present, does), speak to officials, including Curry, whose mind I blew for the London Express, which will reprint 5,000,000 copies, give the Paines something to live with until I return, find and have good talks with the unofficial officials, some of whom I expect to come see me, and other things I cannot communicate by so public a medium as the United States mails.

One public official very much involved in this story has given me in writing his belief that there was a conspiracy to kill Kennedy, and much more. Again, please say nothing about this. I want to both develop it and use it in the proper context in a book already largely written. But does this tell you what Boxley could have done and didn't?

When I add to this the nauseating stuff he and Turner have been feeding Jim and sold him on, what can I do except fear? And I have not even indicated what was the immediate problem.

I have been going to New Orleans when I could afford neither the time nor the money for a few simple reasons. Jim was doing none of the local work. He ordained himself God of our side and proceeded to erect his own throne. He had plenty of disciples, really sycophants. The work wasn't getting done. Those who were there and theoretically had the time and capability not only didn't, but refused when asked. Like there, basking in the glow in particular, was too pleasant. Then there are those who are not comfortable with the fuzz who would - and did - speak to me. This now includes several of Shaw's friends and acquaintances. Also, I wanted to show Jim what he could accomplish by doing the work he should have done but didn't. Well, now I've at least got the staff turned on and demanding they do the New Orleans work, which is a major step. I never go down there without major successes. They are not from skill or genius, not at all. They are from simply doing the obvious that no one has tried. I have already, with solid witnesses, drawn an entirely different picture of Oswald than the official one. More, of Bringuier, where we have the capability of a really major thing if anybody will get interested. If I can get a lawyer and sue him I can do it. After a year of refusing to acknowledge this, Jim now does. But he also does nothing. He is capable of great jealousy, Maggie. He is a very vain and egocentric man, comfortable only with lickspittles and fawners. It has not been easy nor has it been inexpensive to me, but I have pretty much of the Oswald-Bringuier story already developed. I have located the key witness, made a deal with the lawyer involved that would solve everything, left this in the hands of the office, and they have done nothing. Have you ever tried waving holy water against vampires 1500 miles away, Maggie? It is hard on the ulcers. Now I must make a last-minute effort to do this by remote control. That will not be easy. The strange thing is that they do not grab at this, for it also ties separate parts of the case together nicely. The worst part, perhaps, is that they almost ruined this on me three different times, each time by the open violation of the explicit work Jim's word, too.

The simple, straightforward immorality is hard for me to live and cope with. We have had several rather unpleasant sessions about this. It does not make me popular, but I must convince him who would teach the Pope religion that he then must himself pray.

In all of this, please understand I am not telling you how great I am, for that is neither the case nor my belief. I am telling you how far from competent others are.

Jim is under pressure. Properly evaluated, it is certainly no greater than some of us have lived with, less than some. You say he is under pressure on his word, not on the record. I fear very much for the state of his health, and I think that, not the pressure, is the problem. Things happen to me in and on my way to New Orleans that have never happened to him, and they do not really bother me. What they cost me puts me further in debt, but that is all. I just do not react to the pressure, and none of us can if we are going to succeed. Therefore, they are careful with me. I ~~am~~ carefully taped. I know. I have a stack of carbons of these tapes about 3-4 inches high! I have reconstructed the entire mechanism, know the covers and fronts used, even have some of the checks by which payment is made, and I never mention it. They do not even know how I got this - or that I do.

On a separate subject, please ask yourself why there should be agents in control rooms when some of us broadcast, especially those who bring nothing new to light, and not in control rooms when what is new is brought out? It is not for the purpose of making a recording, for that is readily done off the air. It can be for but a single purpose. If and when Jim gets into court, you will then have witnesses who will give first-person accounts. I have the transcripts of these tapes, too, and I have given enough to Louis Ivon.

Well, the day has dawned, foggy as though I were again in LA, and I must get to other things. I did want to background you. One other thing that may be important. I think we should know the entire beginning of the Bradley affair. I did not then believe it and I do not now. It could have ruined Jim even if it were true, for if true he should never have broken it until he had it sewed up. Steve, who thinks his silence is loyalty (and I love him so much I avoid asking him to do what he is reluctant to do, though it may turn out I was unfair to him in not doing this) speaks only in glittering generalities about what they have. Therefore, there is no opportunity for testing the validity or applicability of what they have turned up. That he is a fascist is not material. I have some of the best helping me, but they did not kill Kennedy. I want to see something that will hold up in court. I hope he grows fast enough to understand that we must always look at the other side, find out if we can be wrong, not only look for and believe what we want. Those changes that I observe in Steve after not seeing him for 10 months I do not like. The young man I knew before was a great one. I hope this is just a stage, something he will soon emerge from.

You are wrong, just pessimistic, in saying there are no breakthroughs. There are and we have made them, on fact. The problem is doing something with them, not having them. The additional problem is that we have made them without Jim, who has done nothing but propagandize unless he convicts Shaw. Even the Andrews conviction was not his alone. If he convicts Thornley, that even less will be his alone. Thornley is making noises about suing me. That will be the day! I will then do what Jim either cannot or has failed to. I do not think he will be allowed to. However, Dave is working very hard at it. I wish people out there (not meaning you, for you have disassociated yourself) would keep me posted on him and what he is up to. That can be very informative. I did speak to him this last trip because so many asked me to, particularly Paul, in whose judgement I put great store. Paul was right. I should have spoken to him. I now know what they believe and are up to. Dave thought he was pumping me but did he pour it out himself. I really think his major problem is psychiatric, not that he is an

agent. Well, they may have made the wrong step. I do not yet know. They fed something to a Tampa paper Wednesday. If it is libel perhaps I can arrange for local counsel and do something. I am again seeking counsel in New Orleans and will sue Bringuier if I can arrange it. Meanwhile, I try to get him to serve me when I am there but he refuses to. In fact, he has withdrawn his last suit with prejudice. Against himself, that is.

To show you what is possible in New Orleans, I picked a fight with the managing editor of the Times-Picayune that ended with his inviting me to lunch, which lasted for three hours, and his giving me access to their morgue. No one had ever asked for it. I got valuable things there and also learned what had been removed from it. No one had ever asked for the Oswald footage. I had no trouble getting it. I also had no trouble getting one station showing it to me. Nor was it difficult to reconstruct the working of Shaw and Bermudez in the Cordell Hull Foundation and many other things about the two. Shaw has been very open about much, including his lovers (one had the incredible name that I give you phonetically, Formidabull). Bermudez also had his lovers. He is wired both ways. One of them is a key figure in the case, even the official one. This is one of the things the office loused up on me. I was able to salvage it, but with the greatest difficulty and it remains to be seen if as completely as I could have had they been simply honorable, not broken their pledged word. The story itself is like from a novel. Fortunately, with another of the mysterious deaths, I have it on tape, with permission on the tape.

In the course of this I have developed culpable information about my great and good friend Wesley Liebeler.

I have also begun to establish a relationship with one of the Commission counsel. I expect a day-long dialogue with him soon.

There are so many things that can be done that no one has tried. I have even interviewed Dave Chandler on tape and have really significant information from him. No one tried. He is, as I had suspected, the "Crawford" in Oswald's notebook. I now know what Oswald told him. It included things about another great and good friend of mine, Carlos Bringuier!

Maggie, I was even able to turn on the radical right of the St Tammany Parish Sheriff's Office. They took pictures for me, traced property holdings, things like that. No one ever tried. I have now established that there were four simultaneous Cuban camps north of New Orleans, three known to officials, all three visited the same night. I've got Ricardo Davis on tape saying he was CIA and much more, found, photographed and taped his girl friend on the breaking up of his camp, etc. It was not at all difficult. No one tried.

Instead people spent what in context are enormous sums flying all around the court and the world booby-trapping themselves.

There has been a fortunate by-product. I go to New Orleans with only a few bucks in my pocket, never spend more than 19¢ on a meal, and have lost about 30 pounds. This made it easy. I needed to lose the weight.

Vince and I do not have an easy task ahead. We will try. I think if we succeed it will be because he has not been in contact with the office for some time and has none of the problems there I have, and because he will be so very competent in what he will do. One of us, or both, will keep you posted. We will be staying with a mutual friend. I may stay longer. After this trip it will not be easy for me to go there again soon. I not only cannot afford it, but I have to provide my wife daily transportation after the first of the year and I simply must spend several months in uninterrupted writing. With luck, by the end of April, I will have several more books done. Best to you all,