

Dear Corky,

1/12/76

I regret to say the phlebitis lingers. I seem to have reached a plateau. Except in work. I have a speech, meaning income, in a couple of days. I'll be away four days, which will put me that much more behind. So again I can't make as detailed a response as I'd like to your 1/5/76.

The invitation to visit Cegas is great but I can't afford it and I can't let you bear the expense and this time of the year it is impossible. It would be possible later, perhaps, if I could get someone to stay here after the tax season and take care of book orders and answer the phone, etc. One problem would remain: whether my wife would fly. She isn't afraid of flying itself but the one time she did fly, in 1957, on a DC3 one way and a Connie the other, she was sick for three months from something the doctors then attributed to pressure.

Your offer is, however, warming and I appreciate it. Enough to take a little time to tell you a story.

When the helicopter ruined our poultry farming, aided a bit by a series of sonic booms, and when we had won the first lawsuit and set a precedent and thus had won the second suit except for the amount of damages, we dreamed of a real vacation. Back when I was a Washington magazine correspondent and free-lanced ~~x~~ a Caribbean cruise vacation when her vacation period came. But a series of anti-Nazi exposes I was working on, or rather the success of the first that triggered the series, made it impossible for me. I guess that was 1941. So, I drove her to New York where she took the ship, I went to work and in the next two months or less made about a year's normal income. Before I left New York, with what I had when I went there, I had enough for the government to seize a major drug firm and hold it for the duration of the war. I don't think we ever had a chance for a real vacation after that. And I didn't have one then. ~~XXXX~~ I worked like hell. ~~XXXX~~ Quite a few Nazi cover outfits were taken over after my articles appeared. Then came the war. While I was in OSS we decided to move into the suburbs to get more room and so my wife could garden. She's the greatest at it and loved it. Then we could not afford a vacation in order to pay for the house. Then I got disgusted with the dishonsties required by making a living at non-fiction writing and decided to become a farmer. And with chickens who ever heard of a free minute? So, when it was certain that we'd have a heavy damage settlement from the government (from the Secretary down the Defense Department could not have been nicer to us), our dream was to go to Baltimore, drive along the docks until we saw a boat we liked - a freighter - and first ask if they'd take us and perhaps later ask where. Only the Army and flyboys decided to fight the precedent we had established by using us as guinea pigs, something I later came to suspect and of which I got proof two years ago; and the world-famous lawyer who then represented us turned out to be one of Earl Warren's best friends and the lawyer he put on our case had been Warren's law clerk. Meanwhile, ~~xxx~~ with the end of farming I'd returned to writing and then to the Warren Report. When they learned this they gave us a screwing I never expected. They let the statute of limitations run on almost all we could claim for. With an open-and-shut case. When I learned it was too late for anything except determination and a new lawyer. By keeping saying no to every offer I finally got enough to pay off our considerable mortgage on this place.

So, I know we need a vacation. And I'd love it. Probably we could get someone to stay here. But I really think that when the time comes to get on a plane my wife will remember those three very bad months and what amounts to an allergy to any kind of noise and not fly. Since the time she flew I can remember only four times she was at an airport: with friends who drove my car (she doesn't ~~fly~~ drive) when I went off on and returned from my first transcontinental speaking/investigating trip; and when a friend came to spend a month helping her in 1967, the next year. I don't think she's been at an airport since.



However, I would like to spend some time with you on this Hall stuff.

By the way, my wife was going off for a few days as soon as I got Post Mortem at the printer's. I was not. I was going to be available if there were any problems and to keep things going. My wife was going to spend some time with my mother. Then this phlebitis ended that.

So, I'll make you a counter-offer. You get some local college or civic group or anything to book me for a speech and I'll promise to stay several days longer, whether or not my wife will travel. With a college this would have to be before the end of the college season. If it would or could be arranged and it came while my wife is working the fee will not only enable her to take cabs but would enable me to take her away after the end of the tax season when I can get someone to stay here and I promise you/ I'd use it this way. If you can do this I'll turn it over to my lecture bureau which hasn't done much to date, not as the subject is. They get \$1000 plus expenses, from which they take their cut. Or, I'll do it directly, little as they have booked. The speech I'm about to make I turned over to them. They did not book it for me.

If you know anyone who knows anyone at any nearby college, please try and then we can have a good long talk. There is much I/ want to go over with you besides what you now say. And oh this I've something new. A reporter friend has checked out Hall's claimed alibis. He tells me they do not stack. Otherwise Hall has a solid libel case against National Tatler. Maybe the flyers I'll enclose can help with the colleges.

As you know, I'm the one who got Hall to go to New Orleans, after he won in court. With Howard. He wanted me to go with him but I couldn't raise the money. They just had a crazy part in N.O. Day after day of idle bullshitting. They taped enough of it. Garrison never gave me a transcript but I got one of enough if not all. It was pretty sick stuff. And utterly incompetent. It is one of the things that belated wisdom up about Garrison and his people. (I should, in fairness, make an exception of his regular DA investigators, who were not in on this and who, I am sure, are competent for ordinary police work, which this isn't.)

This was the time I spoke to your dad, about 2/68. Things had happened to you. Hall when I interviewed him was in the VA hospital ruined by the earthquake. The real purpose of my interviews was to get him to go to N.O. I didn't dream that Garrison would freeze me out.

Now I have to tell you about him as it really is: brilliant in some way; quite personable and persuasive; articulate; lazy; crazy as hell; and utterly beyond his depth in this. He never did any real work. He never did any real investigating. He poured over the irrelevant, took anyone else's work he could get, theorized and too often just held court with a motley gang fawning all over him. Some exploited him. With your background what I can tell you will stun you, it is that bad. Meanwhile, while Hall was there, they even tried to use him to steal one of my sources, a man who would have done anything to help if he'd been asked straight out but was outraged by the low ethics and morals of it all. (When Garrison tried it with Lane he threw Lane out.) So, despite your feelings, I have to tell you that there never was any such thing as a Garrison "investigation." There was instead one of the biggest messings-up ever. He never even investigated Shaw, not even after he charged him. I didn't know this until the <sup>end</sup> ~~see~~. Would you dream that a DA would file charges without an investigation? Garrison would have been great as a movie but in real life he was a fiasco. Paranoid to boot.

If there is anything else to which I should have responded, my apologies, as for the typing errors I have to leave you to figure out. I've held my legs up while typing as long as the necks and back will stand and will now make packages in a different and less uncomfortable position. However, I want you to know that whether or not anything comes of it I deeply appreciate your generous offer. And I do hope the day comes when we can sit down and talk this all through, without rush. Best regards,





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5 JAN 76

DEAR HAROLD & FAMILY,

RECEIVED YOUR LETTER THIS DATE. HOPE THE NEW YEAR FINDS YOUR HEALTH BETTER. THE GOOD LORD KNOWS THAT WITHOUT A WIFE TO HELP IT'S AN IMPOSSIBILITY (OUR NEXT 23 YEARS START THIS EASTER).

FANCY STATIONARY IS FURNISHED BY MY DAUGHTER. MAY I SERVE A SUGGESTION? HOPE THIS IS NOT OUT OF LINE., BUT IS MEANT IN THE KINDEST REGARDS AND RESPECT. YOUR EFFORTS OF THESE MANY YEARS ARE PROBABLY TAXED YOU TO THE NEAR MAXIMUM. IS IT THE PROPER TIME TO SIT BACK AND REFLECT A LITTLE BIT? I KNOW PERSONALLY THIS HELPS IN MY OWN EVALUATIONS. A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON EVERYTHING IS A NECESSITY SOMETIMES. IF YOUR WIFE HAS BUSINESS TO ASSUME UNTIL AT LEAST MED APRIL, MAYBE A PLANNED TRIP SHORTLY THEREAFTER MIGHT BE SOMETHING TO LOOK FORWARD TO. DO YOU HAVE SOMEONE TRUSTED TO WATCH YOUR PLACE FOR A SHORT VACATION? WHAT I WOULD PROPOSE IS FOR YOU BOTH TO COME TO VEGAS AS OUR GUESTS IN LATE SPRING OR WHEN EVER CONVENIENT. BY PLANNING I CAN AFFORD Y OUR TRIP, SO IF THIS SOUNDS TO YOUR LIKING PLEASE CONSIDER. NOTHING FANCY OR TO MANY BRIGHT LIGHTS BUT IT MIGHT BE A FRESH APPROACH TO WHAT WE WOULD BOTH LIKE TO ACCOMPLISH IN OUR LIFE TIME. WELL, PLEASE CONSIDER AND GIVE ME YOUR REPLY AFTER WHAT EVER NEEDS TO BE CONVENIENT AS TO TIME.

OK--I'LL HAVE THE NECESSARY PROOF OF EXPENDITURES OF HALL \$\$\$ STARTED THIS WEEK. I DO NOT BELIEVE THIS WOULD BE TO DIFFICULT. I KNOW THE BROKER THAT HANDLED ONE OF HIS TRANSACTIONS OF PROPERTY, AND EVERYTHING ELSE I MENTIONED IN MY LAST LETTER IS OBTAINABLE IN THE KERN COUNTY COURTHOUSE OR THROUGH THE MOTOR VEHICLES DEPT. MAYBE, I'M REFLECTING A BIT, PERHAPS I'M TOO CERTAIN THAT HALL WAS INVOLVED. OR EVEN IT COULD B E CONSIDERED PERSECUTION. NO, ALL I NEED IS TO REMEMBER HIM, HIS ACTIONS, STATEMENTS, CONTACTS, ETC. ESPECIALLY AFTER THE GARRISON INDICTMENT TO KNOW THIS INDIVIDUAL WAS EITHER THERE OR KNEW WHO WAS.

IF I'VE READ WHATEVER HAS BEEN AVAILABLE AND YOUR WORKS COMES CLOSES TO UNDERSTANDING HALL. I KNEW HIM VERY, VERY WELL. TO THE POINT THAT IF GIVEN THE TIME I'M SURE HE WOULD HAVE "UNLOADED" TO ME, MAYBE ANOTHER WEEK OF PRESSURE ON GARRISON'S PART, MAYBE THE LITTLE ADVANTAGE OF HAVING SOME MONEY AT THAT TIME, MAYBE THIS OR THAT, I WOULD HAVE LIKED TO BE GIVEN SOME OF THOSE THINGS THEN, WHEN HE CAME TO ME, WELL I DON'T KNOW BUT PERHAPS HE WOULD HAVE CAVED IN. AFTER ALL THAT KIND OF THOUGHT IS MONDAY MORNIN G QUARTERBACKING, BUT DAMN I'D OF BEEN MORE COMPLETE, MORE CONVINCING, MAYBE HALL HAD SOME OF THE ANWSERS. I'D BET HE DOES AND WOULD GIVE ODDS.



YOU HAVE EXPERTISE OSWALL--I WILL ASSUME YOU AS I ARE LIKE IN OUR THINKING THERE, OF COURSE MOST OF MY CONVICTIONS ARE INFLUENCED BY YOUR WRITINGS. THE POINT BEING IS THAT OTHERS, POSSIBLY MANY OTHERS INFLUENCED THE FINAL ACT AND THE COVERUP THEREAFTER, WELL I BELIEVE THAT A NUMBER OF THESE PEOPLE ARE STILL ABOUT IN ONE CAPACITY OR ANOTHER, AND LIKE A GIANT PUZZLE IT IS A MATTER OF FITTING, NOT SIMPLY, AS YOU WELL KNOW, PERPLEXING IN SO MANY AVENUES, BUT ULTIMATELY YOU WILL PROVE YOUR CORRECTNESS. MAYBE THIS IS A RECHARGING OF MY THOUGHTS, BUT I KNOW THAT SOMEWHERE EVERY DAY AND POSSIBLY EVERY HOUR THERE ARE PEOPLE CONCERNED AND SWEATING. HALL IS ONE. HAROLD YOU CAN'T IMAGINE THE PRESSURE THE MAN WAS UNDER AT THE TIME WE WERE "CLOSE". THIS PERSONAL CONCERN OF DOING THE RIGHT THING AND SAYING THE RIGHT THING, AND STILL ALLOWING FOR HIS PERSONAL "EGO TRIP", WAS ALMOST UNIMAGINED. THE MAN WAS IN A LITERAL "HELL". DROWNING MUST BE A SIMILAR EXPERIENCE. I NOW REALIZE HIS MISREPRESENTATION TO JIM GARRISON, AND WOULD LOVE TO DEARLY COMPARE "NOTES" WITH JIM ON THIS. I KEPT GARRISON AWARE OF HALL'S MOVEMENTS, CONTACTS, PERSONAL REACTIONS, ETC., AND SUDDENLY HALL IS SOME KIND OF "HERO" FOR GOING TO NEW ORLEANS TO CONTRIBUTE NOTHING. MYSTREY. I MAY HAVE RELATED THIS TO YOU PRIOR, BUT KERNVILLE RESIDENTS (REALLY ONLY THE BAR PATRONS) LOOKED ON HALL AS A CELEBRITY. OF COURSE HE RELISHED THE LIMELIGHT. BRAGGING ON HIS KNOWLEDGE OF THE WHOLE PICTURE, AND HOLDING AUDIENCE AS OFTEN AS IT WAS REQUESTED. THIS IS AFTER HIS RETURN FROM NEW ORLEANS. HE MUST HAVE FELT "SAFE" AT THIS POINT AND FEARED NO REPRISALS. NO GUNS. NO LOOKING OVER HIS SHOULDER AS WAS THE CASE PRIOR TO NEW ORLEANS. LOT OF SPECULATION ON MY PART, BUT IT ONLY IS FUEL TO MY SINCERE CONVICTION AND/OR THEROY OF HIS INVOLVEMENT. MR. GARRISON WAS, AT MY LAST PERSONAL CONTACT WITH HIM, SEEMINGLY ~~WAS~~ CONVINCED OF HALL'S PARTICIPATION. WHAT COULD HALL HAVE PROVEN TO GARRISON TO HAVE TURNED JIM'S THOUGHTS AND WHAT-EVER EVIDENCE COMPLETELY AROUND? MR. GARRISON WAS AT ONE TIME TOLD OR HAD PROVEN EVIDENCE THAT HALL WAS A MATERIAL WITNESS, BEFORE OR AFTER THE FACT. BUT AFTER THE TRIP TO N.O. HE COMES OUT "CLEAN". THESE LOOSE ENDS. I'M SURE YOU HAVE CONSIDERED THOUSANDS, BUT THESE ARE SOME OF THE THOUGHTS THAT STILL REMAIN WITH ME.

MAY I ASK YOU WHAT CONCLUDES YOUR CERTAINTY THAT MCDONALD'S BOOK IS A FRAUD? MONEY? NOTICE? OR WHAT? I FOUND ONE DIRECT FLAW UPON FIRST READING. YOU MUST HAVE DISCOVERED MORE TO ARRIVE AT YOUR CONCLUSIONS. WELL, IT'S A STORY I HAVE SEEN NO PUBLIC ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF, OR SUPPORT EITHER, MAYBE IT (HIS BOOK) WILL JOIN OTHERS THAT REALLY BEAR NO FUTURE CONSIDERATION.

AS SLOW AS I TYPE I'LL CONCLUDE HERE. HOPE YOU FEEL BETTER. WRITE AS YOU HAVE TIME, BUT I'D APPRECIATE SOME OF YOUR THOUGHTS ON THE ABOVE.

BEST TO ALL,  
*W. J. Houston*  
 "CORKY"