

10/31/71

Dear Lou,

It has been a long time since I've heard from you although when last I did you said you expected to be near here soon and would then see me. That would have been perhaps two months ago. I then told you that at some point I would be going to New Orleans again and that when this happened, unlike the past, when I did not share your and Jim's apprehensions, there might be some danger.

Since then - have written you at least twice, once asking a few questions you could have answered easily and once asking if you received them. You have not responded. I prefer to avoid articulating the obvious interpretations I might put on this silence as I avoid asking you what it might embarrass you to answer.

However, I now believe it will not be too long before I will be down there again. This time I will not have Matt's place for a pad. I'll have to use a motel. It would serve me better if it were centrally located and I will have to use one with modest prices and a restaurant so I can use a credit card as much as possible. I am broke and still deep in debt and I will be using someone else's money. It would also be best if I could be certain that this motel has no gangland connections. I may have to use a car, and if I do it would be helpful to know where I can arrange one at lowest cost, the condition of the car, as long as it runs with fair dependability, being no consideration. If I do not use a car, it would then be an asset to have a motel convenient to public transportation. I do not know how long I will have to stay but I do not think it will be very long. And it may be that if I do not require a car all the time, I will for part of it. If you recall some of the questions I asked you, you can understand this.

Thus I write in advance to ask your recommendations so I can make arrangements in advance and not hit there cold and having to start a time-wasting search.

Almost, but not entirely, I will be occupied with matters that I have no reason to believe have ever been of interest to your office. There is but one exception of which I now know. It is not the central purpose of this trip. Should you desire me to be more specific, I have no reluctance. My indirection is solely to avoid any possible embarrassment to you or complications in your lives. Thus, if it should be preferred that I not pay a courtesy call at the office, as ordinarily I would, have no reluctance in telling me. As you can understand, what to me is a strange silence is not something I can ignore entirely. I do not know what is of interest to your office now. I will have no reluctance in discussing the considerable progress in my work but I will have every reluctance in being specific in such a way that would enable even part of it to be duplicated by anyone. Its success for the first time forces this precaution on me. It is not a personal reflection on anyone, merely a precaution "success" has forced upon me. I am past the Archives, far past it.

I have not kept up with developments in the Shaw case and have no idea of its status. The same is true of Shaw's damage suit. Here I am certain that when the time comes, if it does, I'll have new evidence that can provide them with what (and remember, I am not a lawyer) should be a very effective if not a complete defense. Thus if Robertson or any of the others who have been helpful to Jim in the past or their lawyer, if I trust him, want to speak to me, please feel free to make the arrangements. Regardless of whether or how you answer, I will be informing you of my plans when I know them. Such a meeting can be completed in as little as 10 minutes. Unless he has deceived me, which I do not believe, there is no prospect of any collection from Jim personally. Because of the present case against him, they might feel better if the contact were direct. I am not trying to bypass Jim and I will be happy to tell him about it, too, should he so desire. My opinion of that case is unchanged. In fact fortified by a rather unusual reading I have on it from a former Warren Commission counsel. If Jim wants to talk to me, he should know I'll look forward to it. And if I can be of any help in that case, it is my desire to be. There may be some developments of which someone might want to inform me. My work has gone past the

FBI and Hoover. It now includes a new insight into and fact about the Department of Justice and the present administration of it in particular. I have been tangling with them with some success, such success that even defeat has been significant victory. However, it is not all defeat. I also got an unreported summary judgement against it.

When I make this trip to New Orleans, that will not be my first stop when I leave home, so what I can carry will be limited. However, if you have had trouble getting a copy of the charges against Jim, I have a Department of Justice copy I'll be glad to bring and lend you. An extra inch of papers is no great problem.

This trip may be four or five weeks away. It is possible that before then I will be going to Dallas for a few days. Should anyone desire to see me before then, and I am not assuming anyone will, I'll be glad to return by way of N.O. for this purpose. If the past is not bitter and there remains interest, I have developed new information about Ferrie and others (not here including Shaw). I will be willing to disclose it in confidence. But by this I mean real confidence, not the frivolity of the past where whatever I said almost immediately was broadcast to those who could and did only misuse it. Without this assurance, because I will be writing about it and because I also have hopes of carrying it further, I will not discuss it.

It also seems possible to me that if there is a chance Alford will be used or may be used in the case against Jim, someone might want to take a statement from me that is entirely opposite two of the things he said in that part of his statement on resigning that appeared in the papers. I was sent copies. He did offer to fix a case for me. It is a case of which you have knowledge. I do not know its ultimate disposition. I did not ask this of him and I did not accept his offer. Also, the last time I was in New Orleans, as you may remember, he and Oser met me at the airport. It was a Sunday, the one before the jury selection began. I spent the day with them. I then told him that what he planned was factually wrong, was certain to lose the case, and I would not be part of it. This may have been a decision made in advance for him, so it may be of no use to you. But it is not what he said of himself on resigning, is it? In the fixing matter, I can conceive of harm to the then defendant, so I would feel obligated to obtain assent before any public use be made of this statement, should it be wanted. As I think of it, there was an arrest, there seemed to be no question of guilt, so I think it is likely that the case was fixed and if it was an old enemy of Jim, who was defense counsel, might well have figured in it. Could that make it more interesting? You should have no trouble learning who in your office handled the case if it ever left Alford's hands. And perhaps who was defense counsel at that time. As of my last knowledge, it was a learned lawyer of dubious literary credentials but one who took time from a profitable practice for what had to be anticipated as and what ~~what~~ <sup>had to</sup> have been a very unprofitable scrivining.

Hope you are all well.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg