

Dear Jim,

9/29/72

It was thoughtful and kind of you to call, as it would have been had Ivon let you use his phone for it. I hope you could afford it.

As I recall what you said, you will be leaving New Orleans in the morning or tomorrow sometime. I will be gone all morning, so I write because you did not call and I really did not expect him to unless your coming embarrassed him enough. He knew he had not sent me the transcripts. I wrote him at least three times and Jim once. I had laid aside other things to write that story and I needed the transcripts. Frankly, I saw in the one you sent (probably in Jim's impulse) what I think they did not, and possibilities I think they do not visualize.

But when weeks went by and I heard nothing, I laid that work aside. There is too much to which I can't get to fool around that way.

You did not have to send me the transcripts. All he had to do was ask a secretary to xerox and send them. Had he asked it once it would have been done automatically.

The only question in my mind is was it his decision or Jim's. I suspect it was Jim's. But it makes no difference.

It will not hurt me. It will not help Jim. It is their decision and I'll not ask them again. In the end it may hurt Jim because the next time they call upon me - if there is a next time - I'll be busy. And it will be true, not put on. Each time I've gone there it was at the cost of other work.

I can't begin to explain the situation in any way you would be able to accept and understand or that won't sound vain. Perhaps if you can come to understand that no that you are out of college your real education is just about to begin you can begin to get a glimmer of it. One of the things you will learn is that some people can't bear being wrong. They can less abide having someone else see it in advance and warn them. And there are those who find it intolerable that others can do what they cannot - and do it.

In the areas of their regular obligations, Jim's office is, I would imagine, up to par. When they get out of those areas they are lost. In my experience, the only one who really worked hard was you. I liked him and I respected him. Perhaps if some of the lawyers had had more freedom in the work with which I was familiar they might have done better. But what was called their "probe" was never anything but a joke, and not a funny one. Jim never acknowledged this to himself, kept telling himself how brilliant and great he was, and on this it just wasn't so.

It is he who most resented not being right when he was so convinced he was. I don't think he will ever forgive me for forcing the on victory he had in all of this and then making it possible. It was in his suit for the autopsy and related materials in Washington.

Nor do I think any of those closely involved will forgive me for predicting they would lose the Shaw case, telling them they deserved to, and not staying for it. I had no idea what their case would be until the Sunday before the selection of the jury. I worked with Oser and Alford in Oser's home that day and then learned, with some shock. They wouldn't listen, Jim wouldn't listen, I never went into the courtroom once (even though when the trial began the New York Times listed me as expert advisor sitting at the counsel table). After that day I wasn't even curious to see Shaw. I didn't go into the courtroom while the jury was being selected. Instead, I sat and continued the writing of a book - began that Sunday night, that fact, once I realized the futility of what they were doing. I set the day for my departure and as I told them, if they didn't listen, I would leave then.

I don't know which of my sins was more unwelcome there, working hard and long; being right; not being a sycophant; and not bending for convenience and favor. Any one of them is enough in that situation.

Strange things are still going on in that office. I really have no interest in finding out what. I'll be quite surprised if at least one in a position of confidence doesn't surface in another role. Jim is the easiest man in the world to con. He does it to himself. He has an infinite capacity for trusting the wrong people and distrusting those in whom he should have trust. If he has learned, I'll be surprised.

Louisiana is a place like no other. All the staff will be without serious problems if anything happens. They'll still have jobs and careers. And if the government gets Jim, most citizens will believe him in court, as I am inclined to.

Those who may get hurt are the men who financed Jim, who repaid them by wanting most of their money. Shaw's lawyers are determined to press the civil suit. They can't collect a cent from Jim and they know it. They are out to ~~kill~~ ^{hurt} the rich ones, from whom they can collect. I don't know any of them. If I did and he or they mentioned my name to Jim, he would nix it and me, so I never tried to meet any of them. Besides, as you should remember, when I was there I worked, and ever night. Even at supper, you should recall. So I never had time for such things.

There are two ways I might be able to help them. I met with Sal Panzeca after you left for Houston when we were there together and I told him quite frankly that I believe I can defeat him. He wanted to know how, but I would give him only a hint about one of the ways. That was the less important way. Or least.

You should understand that that trial will place an enormous burden on Shaw. There is nothing about him that can't be aired in public, and the kind of character he enjoys is relevant, as your father, who is a lawyer, can explain better than I, in any assessment of damages, so he is wide open, to be laid bare. How why would he subject himself to this? The answer is simple: he is persuaded (and was persuaded by his lawyers) that Garrison has no case of perjury or any other kind. Therefore, they expect to prevail and expect that the recovery will be large enough to repay Shaw for the suffering.

To me, and I can be wrong, Garrison shows signs of having flipped, and not for the first time. As long as he is Orleans Parish D.A. he has some heft and can do things to defend himself. If he is elected judge, he is without this power. His term will last long enough for these tests and trials to be over. So, I think it folly to give up power for no power.

The one exception I can see is anticipation that he may be removed from office. Were this to happen, the situation would be entirely different.

As a judge, he is only a man with a job, unless he wants to be a real crook, which I don't believe.

Anyway, I've tried to explain the situation as I see it. I think I'm right but can't be absolutely certain.

I'd like it better if you would call, but I still do not expect it. There is no need for him to call unless he wants something. He has in writing what I asked for, and all are public records. I asked for no secrets.

However, if you are back there again and are of a mind to take the time, the only transcript I have is the first one in Christenberry's court, the first appearance Frank Klein made. The dates were last July 8 and 9, more than a year ago. Maybe he'll let you xerox them, but the chances are they will not be in his office, so he'll have a legitimate reason for putting you off.

And if you have a job, by all means do NOT take time off for this.
But thanks for the willingness and for calling me.

Good luck,