

Dear Jimmy,

3/2/77

When I brought the morning paper in and looked at it I saw signs of something coming with the committee in which you place hope and from which there is no hope for you. Payday came and went and the staff was not paid again. This means Gonzalez is even a bigger dope than I'd thought.

Before I explain this - and if as usual you pay attention it will serve as notes for the future for me - let me update you on your new pal's relationships. He had switched to Gonzalez because he had no choice. The committee and the staff learned that his word is worthless and realized that he had booby-trapped them at every turn. Then he boasted th the Wash. Post that Sprague owes his job to him. So to Sprague and not just recently, he became persona non grata. He may still be palsy with Fauntroy - I make no effort to keep up with those kinds of things but such comes to me - but he wanted in on the JFK stuff. This meant he had to get cozier with Gonzalez and he did. Gonzalez is a lightweight with a taste for nuts.

Then the mail came with some clippings, new and returned. I'll be quoting a few of them. Jim sent me a copy of the letter in which you say "Any fool can see what Weisberg's motive is, he concerned about his unpublished book, that Lane by somehow being in with Sprague will have the uppers."

If does not take the intelligence of a fool to perceive the foolishness in your childish effort to find an excuse you can live with. But I'll explain again. Who knows, if it is a nice day you might even think.

Normally a book is finished at least three months before its publication date. Normally it is submitted six month earlier. Work backward and you'll see that for a 4/4 pub date Lane had to have his book in about the first of the year. So his uppers would be of the past in any event. If you knew anything about public relations you'd know that any official looking for attention does not limit himself to one. He plays the field. So there was no competitive situation. Besides, this kind of information that you imagine and does not exist there can't possible hold long enough for a book. The little bit of innonsense they had is known in detail or in outline and it is nonthingness. You don't understand Lane. His book will make a bid deal about how he made the committee possible and then did all its work for it. So he is hysterical now with the committee coming apart and all his stuff being exposed in the mass-circulation media as stolen where it is not bullshit. Not much of a book. You will learn about its error. He is famous for it. I'm saying he is always that way.

If I wanted any kind of "uppers" with Sprague would I have fought with him? You know I did because I sent you a letter or two. Who seeks favors that way? Besides, why would I seek them from a hired hand? Why would I not cultivate the black members and their black staffs with entres I have? To this day I have seen none. The fact is that I have stayed away from this committee all along, not a way to get "uppers," except when they asked me to go there. They asked for position papers and I provided them. They did not take the advice they agreed to so you can see what has happened. If I want some "uppers" these provide it once they become Keystone Kops, which editorials all around the country are calling them

They had nothing to give me. It was the toher way around. You have to know that. You are wing the wrong kind of outfit and the wrong kind of powder when you guess about what I have and do not have and that I'm anxious to get what they get by subpoena, of which more.

I do hope you can see that none of this makes sense as you write it and I suppose believe it. It is all as unreal as it can be. Not only that but I announced at a meeting at New York University Law School almost two years ago. They were all there. I said if they were going to lay their customary bullshit on the Congress, which I then was sure would get interested, it would be without me. I gave some specifics about Bud & Lane

who have long careers as...

In getting back to the committee farce I'd like you to ask yourself why Foreman took your case when you had no money and if you were guilty and he got his money from that he had a conflict. There was no book with you nit guilty, you know. Publicity can explain it because it brings cases to him. That is not true of Sprague. His is not that kind of law firm. He has all the Philadelphia area business he can handle, including Mafia. This is not to argue in but to suggest context for his being so stubborn, taking all this punishment and loss of income and even taking the job when he had a real JFK conflict. You should know that there is no precedent for either an employee staying on when the chairman wants to fire him or the House not supporting the chairman. First time here.

Now at least one of the members is a former FBI agent. Two were on the old un-American committee and thus Hoover's closest pals. How much do you think any of these three will do against St. Edgar or the FBI on the committee when - if - it holds hearings? I put it this way not alone because they may die but because the smallest item in their Sprague budget is for witnesses, as I recall they planned for only \$23 in two last while years out of a \$6.5 million in expenditures. Does this sound like the prosecutor expected to test his case in the open or behind closed doors after which he would say whatever he wanted, a luxury he does not enjoy in open court?

I have a Scripps-Howard story that reports the Democratic Leader Jim Wright as saying he had worked out a deal in which Sprague takes a demotion. Sprague swore that would never happen. But this also means the politicians are not trusting Gonzalez and are trying to keep Sprague by any means possible. There is no lawyer that indispensable because he is a top lawyer. There are too many of them.

Now when you put this alone together with the fact that the staff has not been paid and Wright's offer to let the staff use his phone for their p.d. calls it means that despite what the papers have said, that Gonzalez has accepted the Wright deal, he has not. And the leadership has insulted him in many ways.

Gonzalez is not bright but he is not chicken, either. He'll probably force the issue to the floor of the House. It will not make much difference what happens because as you won't let yourself see this committee does not have any ~~any~~ credibility and if continued it carried nothing by way of credibility ever to help sustain them after all the fans turn on and all their false information starts flying back into their faces. Ten angels swearing on the witness stand will be laughed at and ridiculed now. You may want it to be otherwise but it isn't. And Sprague is not what you think in professional terms, either. He may be tough in the court room but he is putty to the spoks who plant little ghosts he then chases wildly. Like your contact in Portugal or Oswald in Mexico, from which you have not heard a word this year, have you?

There is more but if you are willing to think this should be enough.

Now subpoenas. Good point, subpoenas. That hotshot you place so much faith in delayed issuing any for two months and then flubbed it. First he wrote letters to a few, little finger out like at pink teas not fighting in court. Then he sent one of his King people up to see me and we worked until 8 at night on what he should do and where he would find what. And then a month later Sprague issues subpoenas - against your former counsel. His honcho Oser having said foolishly to Jim that this is how they were going to solve the crime, though Foreman. For their own work or Canale or Stanton's files or Carlisle or the FBI but through you. Impossible unless they believe without doing any work that you are guilty. This is straight DJ, as you know. So naturally they leave the FBI alone. You worry about what they may get on some future subpoena and pay no attention when I tell you that in almost a half year they have not issued the right ones and lied to boot about what they did have as it relates to you. The Memphis gang gave them nothing except talk-talk that is false but places you at the scene of the crime by alleged FBI evidence. I have that evidence and the transcript of that November hearing and believe me or not I'm telling you the DJ lawyer Sprague put in charge of the ing work lied about you and the evidence that put you at the scene of the crime. Then he lied

a bout where he got the only records they had - when they were two months old mine you! He said prosecution. I'm telling you it was from me the month before and Jim knows it. He was there when Ken Brooten gave them back to me 11/17 and apologized because they had "lost" some.

I guess Brooten and Sprague do not get along and that is why Gonzalez picked Brooten, who has previous Congressional experience, to be staff director. (I'm told I could have had that job at the beginning. I refused all jobs there. So much for your imagined "uppers." Bud was to have been in Sprague's job as chief counsel. I talked him out of it.)

Brooten called me on 11/7 to ask for information and help. I jumped all over him because he was there on 10/20 when I told Sprague that a precondition of any association I had or help I provided was the strict protection of all your rights. "otherwise I said I had a conflict and would have nothing to do with them. This was assurance against prejudicial leaks like there have been and you ignore and against the kind of dirty deal Sprague and Ozer tried to pull with Foreman. Brooten was honest. He said he knew I was telling the truth, knew Sprague had made this guarantee and knew he would not keep it. It is this and not your invention about me speaking for you that cause the hot letter of which I sent you a copy. Sprague replied by phone and in writing and said I was totally and completely correct. So they go ahead anyway after that and after his promises to jim in my presence and then they use Fauntroy to leak the stuff about you being the killer and then they put it in their report. It really is all this way.

On the clippings: what Justice is now talking about is you "making a clean breast." I think that will change before very long.

2/3 Gonzalez had you and Oswald the assassins in an ~~int~~ interview with the Phila Bulletin, "said yesterday he has new evidence that the two assassins did not act alone."

Same paper, where Sprague is a hero, about the committee 2/6, "regarded by some here as little more than a media spectacle." Same paper, 2/4, they have witnesses who will "round out Oswald's role" and on you Gonzalez "hinted that the witnesses in the King case have criminal backgrounds." Curtis? Dan Dowda? Austin? Aeb? Bradley? Want a longer list ~~as~~ for the chorus? They all sang and more with them, but it wasn't melody.

What are the prospects? According to Majority Leader Jim Wright (2/26) "It either of them walks off in a huff, that's the end of the investigation." With no pay and what it represents is not far off.

You want to get caught in the middle of all this?

You have no questions when you know you were hoodlared by Lane when he got you to sign for an FOIA "suit" he has never filed? He needs nothing from you under the Act. He got you to sign for entirely different reasons, so he could pretend this is how he got whatever he steals or makes up.

We, Jim and I, were not "hostile from the beginning." I have notes and receipts to show it. I mean notes from them, not mine. Why do you think I gave them as heavy a box of my records as their man could carry 10/22 when I'm writing a book if not to help them with you, to get them off right and honest despite what I knew of some of the Members? Their research director was on his own invitation coming here three days later, taking a motel room with his own xerox and it never happened-long before any hassle. I have an index to the evidentiary hearing. Jim has it. I offered it. They still don't have or want it and that, too, was long before the hassle. Sprague ordered them not to read Jim's briefs - long before any hassle. To be "unprejudiced."

I could go on and on. I suspect you've been fed a load of Lane. In any event, I have nothing to lose in this and all to gain except for the time I take trying to keep you from wrecking yourself. My problem is not having enough. I have too much for a book. I had all I needed and more in time to have had a book out a year or more ago, if I was still working for a book. So wise up before you hurt yourself more. Sincerely,

Mr. James H. Lesar  
Att. at Law  
910 Sixteenth Street, N.W.  
Wash. D.C. 20006.

February 24, 1977

Dear Jim:

I have your letter dated February 13th to the House Speaker, Thomas P. O'Neill; also, your letter dated February 20th to me.

First, what is the difference who was responsible for the select committee? According to you if Lane had not supplied the information there may have never been a committee, now you suggest the committee should go out of business and another one formed. That may be foolish thinking as if the present one goes under most likely they won't vote in another. Actually since the HC. was denied there is no way to get a forum except possibly the committee. However I think it would be a mistake for me to commit myself to anything, I could have waited until I saw what the committee intended doing by way of subpoenaing files we were never able to, and never will be able to through the courts, before committing myself to the committee. However you and Weisberg, apparently because of Lane's association with Sprague, were hostile from the beginning instead of using a little finesse. Any fool can see what Weisberg's motive is, he's concerned about his unpublished Book, that Lane by somehow being "in" with Sprague will have the uppers. Now where I could have set-back and waited for the committee to indicate what they intended doing, not what they have necessarily been saying what they intended doing, I have to write then that your Sherman statement does not necessarily apply to me.

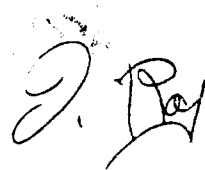
I would like to know by what authority you have for writing the committee in a manner which suggested that you have the final say on what ever I do? I wrote you about a year ago saying there would not be much use of further litigating the HC, as that was blown in Memphis with Bud & Bob's "good guy" roll, and to just let thing die out. But you went ahead and appealed the 6th cir. judgment apparently for reasons of your own.

Also, I get tired of listening to talk like you and Harold "breaking your ass" for me, I have always assumed there was a quid pro quo involved. Now it is not my fault if Harold can't get his Book published; I supposed when and if it is published your argument is that I'll get a new trial. Your talk about Lane setting up the committee therefore is responsible for the Justice department recent report don't make sense. Justice did not set up the task force because of the committee or Lane's actions, and you know it. As far as Lane is concerned, you have twist that around just like you have the committee, I (no) he don't give a shit for me without you distorting the situation

In concluding, the case is CLOSED. If Harold can publishing anything for a buck GOOD he has my blessing, but I don't intend setting here like a hermit untill he publishes it.

Sincerely: James e. Ray #65477

ps. I sent the letter Harold refered to  
too your old address, certified.



Mr. James H. Lesar  
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Suite-600  
Washington, D.C...20006.

February 24, 1977

in re: Mark Lane.

Dear Jim:

In reply to your letter dated February 20, 1977, wherein you requested among others things certain information concerning the above cited Attorney, Mr. Mark Lane.

1. After Mr. Donald Freed contacted me a couple years ago I subsequently agreed to see Mr. Lane in, Mr. Lane capacity as Attorney or representative for, Mr. Freed.
2. When I signed the paper for Mr. Lane authorizing him to file a FOI suit I "did not" sign a waiver. Further, as you well know having received a duplicate copy through, I believe, Harold, I later sent Mr. Lane a letter dated October 4, 1976, adding certain stipulation to the FOI suit.
3. I have signed a paper written by him authorizing him to published not more than 6 or 8 papers (letters) I have mailed various individuals & organizations during the past eight years.
4. In substance I have told him I am now sure I can prove that I could not have shot Dr. Martin Luther King jr.

The above is substantially all I have told him. I now consider the matter closed Permanently, i.e., I have no interest, and do not intend, responding to any further disputes between you and Mr. Lane no matter which party should correspond to me about said dispute.

Sincerely: James E. Ray #65477

P.O. Box-73

Petros, Tn. 37845.

cc: Mark Lane, Esq  
105 and Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C.20002.

