

Dear Jim: This has been an afternoon of intermindable interruptions so my explanation of the attached letter to Lifton is brief. My purposes have to do with Wakeford-Orloff, for whom he was ripping off my work, the lack of success in which seems to have led to their suing each other; and with, more remotely, what Freed seems to be up to. I'm needing Lifton slip as is the hope that it will inspire him to indiscretion. HE 7/22/75

David Lifton
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7/22/75

David,

I note with approval that you are now taking much less time to mail your letters.

And that you are anxious enough to take Saturday time to write and Sunday to put in the mailbox.

It pleases me much that with such protestations as "I decided not to get involved and further" by writing me and "why should I bother to deal with you in any way" representing the apparent state of your mind you were you nonetheless were able to summon the inner strength to write me about "friends" and "help."

He who does not have you for a friend misses a unique experience. The lexicographer who looks your definition of the word as exemplified also by you is limited to the inadequacies as defined by the Nixons, Ehrlichmans, Haldemans, Mitchells, Kleindiests and others of their circle. I have heard them use the same word.

You have already defined "help" bus, saying you have gone back into your files, it appears you have not gone back far enough. I remember your unselfish "help" when you wrote the New York Times about me and my work. You also "helped" the Times, where there were internal disputes about covering assassination stories. You then "helped" me by faulting me for accurate quotation of FBI reports.

The tragedy is that you were too busy reconstructing the papier mache trees from which the JFK assassination was committed - or was it there unseen removal? - to have dug these reports up yourself.

Had you not also been so preoccupied tracing out all those tunnels Brown & Root dug unseen in Dealey Plaza and filled in as invisibly, "help" without precedent or equal, you instead of I might have forced the somewhat hasty installation of the Zapruder camera in the Archives in time to be there for the appearance of the book in which this FBI report and others were reproduced.

If you had not bent your unique investigative talents to uncovering the web of conspiring all over Texas by Lyndon Johnson and Dean Rusk just before this JFK assassination you, not I, might have displayed this camera to the press (Mike Berlin of the N.Y. Post) and pointed out for publication its unusual controls never once mentioned in the Warren Report or all 26 volumes or anywhere of which I have heard in all those 300 cubic feet. Late December¹⁹⁶⁶ or early January 1967 must have been an extraordinarily busy time for you what with all those astounding discoveries you made for Ramparts, all in the work of others if original sources were not credited. How to avoid those original sources as published no doubt is what delayed this letter from a "friend" whose sole purpose was to "help" for a year. But those on the Times who had twice aborted efforts by the paper to do its own investigating no doubt have sincerest appreciation of friendship and help as you offered them. They must have been quite appreciative for the effect continues to be reflected in its pages.

At lack of consistency with regard to original sources is not a vice of which my dearest of friends and most sincere of helpers can be accused. Thus with the appearance of a book consisting of facsimile reproduction of executive sessions (which I had earlier been distributing by xerox) and a Libeler name (which just happened not to be identical with the Archives copy) there was the Secret Service's initial interrogation of Marina Oswald naturally not indicated as having been brought to light much earlier in this infamous book whose sin was accurate quotation and of which it is the very first part - the book that required a letter to the Times a year later, after its author had been rebuked for a proclivity toward ripping off.

You do refer to "imagined wrongs," "malarky," "irrational hostility" and being "suspicious of everybody" so maybe it would be just as good not to make a point of consistency or to illustrate, with the other available instances. After all, how else can a man do when he is charging Allen Dulles as Lyndon Johnson's fellow conspirator of the week before the offing instead of Rusk and he is so exhausted from having suborned the perjury of a Thornley agent John Rene Heindell? To say nothing of the debilitating effects of defending the pure and perfect Thornley from charges not made and against an offer that would have saved him much anguish, cost and notoriety. True friends are so rare, real help so exceptional, as by now perhaps even Thornley may realize.

Whatever he may be doing other than gloating over almost - literally - popping out the eyes of a man who dared to defend a woman abused by this same decent "hornley.

So true and loyal a friend and so dedicated a helper as you ought realize that this confession of trust in the meaning of words when I learned those words has so enfeebled me that I cannot summon the energy to consult files, which means getting up and bending. And then having to stand and walk again. So let us assume that despite my recollection I did not ask you to provide from standard sources what they say about how one conducts proper spectrographic and neutron-activation tests. (Were it not that I recognize the decrepitude of years I'd swear that in early June I wrote you and Paul about the kind of help Jim and I could use.) And let us assume also that Jim did not indicate when you and he spoke that we could use this kind of help (that ugly word again!) ~~was not to be used~~ Do I not recall your representations of your expertise in this field, your training, and the appropriate talents of those upon whom you could and would draw for (I almost profaned this by saying "help" again)? Can it be that with your fine scientific education and your brilliance in investigation you did not imagine that this is the kind of basic information and documentation that might be of - coops! - some value in the litigation? Can it be that those nasty spooks kept it from being delivered to Jim or me? And that they then pilfered your files to remove the carbon of your covering letter which you do not cite?

If this perchance what you mean by "the real irony about " my being "so suspicious of everybody" so I can't "distinguish between persons who would like to help you [me] and those who would happily walk all over you?" I can't deny that from what you write and from the record I can distinguish.

It must also be failing memory that makes me believe I had suggested one way of helping was to bear some of the costs of breaking loose what you got for the cost of zeroing only. Jim reports no refund from the Department of Justice.

That my memory is not totally gone you assure me in saying that I did in fact ask for copies of your "2.5 million dollar ~~with~~ NLK suit." (How far in the past that request seems for you now to mention it for the first time!) On this you ask me to put myself in your shoes. Figuratively and literally I'll pass that one up. There is a limit to what besides friends and help I can survive. Instead I'll just be "a self-pitying wrybaby who...doesn't have an accurate memory or deliberately distorts" (aka "suspicious") and wonder how you did 2.5 million dollars worth of work on the NLK case when all the time I thought I wrote that book. Is it my lack of an "accurate memory" that leads me to believe you tried to get copies of my work from Ed Kabak and then, after I wrote these you are in litigation with phoned him to chide him for telling me? Would it also be "suspicious" of me to wonder why when they phoned me much earlier and I offered them the movie rights to this work without any of them ever having met me and with your prior Executive Action (aka Mary Ferrell) association with them they developed a distaste for dealing with the owner of the rights?

Please reconsider (again) your decision "not to get involved any further - even to the level of answering" and "why should I bother." Your sometimes tardy letters mean much to me. I learn from them. And they make so good a record!

7 19 75

Dear Harold,

Your letter of 7/16 comes off as that written by a self-pitying crybaby, one who--for that matter--either doesn't have an accurate memory or deliberately distorts the facts of what occurred just weeks ago.

In your fifth paragraph, you state that you made a request of me. Nowhere in my files or our recent letters is there any such request. If I am wrong, do ~~point~~ it out to me. Quote me the date and the paragraph.

To the contrary, your recent letters have contained nothing but a bunch of nastiness and vituperation, largely based on imagined wrongs and the usual Weisbergia. After receiving all that malarky, I decided not to get involved any further---even to the level of answering the one request you did make---which was to xerox court papers connected with my 2.5 million dollar MKK suit. Put yourself in my shoes---why should I bother to deal with you in any way, in the face of such blatant irrational hostility?

If you can't have the decency to be civil (didn't your mother teach you that, Harold, when you were a little boy---or did you just get born into the world as nasty and mean as you are today???) I don't see why I should waste the time to bother.

The real irony about you is that you have become so suspicious of everybody, that you are apparently no longer able to distinguish between persons who would like to be of help to you and those who would happily walk all over you.

What I have learned from this altercation with you is that when a person has so lost the ability to differentiate between potential friends and enemies, it is a futile exercise and perhaps even a gross waste of time to even try to be of help.

David Lifton

