

August 23, 1974

Mr. Arthur Ceppos
President, Julian Press
150 Fifth Avenue
New York City, N. Y. 10011

Dear Arthur,

Harold and I have decided to publish the book about the January 27 Warren Commission Executive Session transcript ourselves. I have already taken out a loan for this purpose and we expect the book to be printed very shortly.

We have already loaned out our only copies of the manuscript for persons who needed to give immediate attention to it. In the short interval between now and the time the book is published, we could make good use of the copy of the manuscript we left with you. If you could mail it back to us within the next few days, we would be deeply appreciative.

Sincerely yours,

Jim Lesar

O'Toole press conference on appearance of Assassination Tapes from reporter's tape

I listened to this tape that is frequently of poor quality and often inaudible first while driving and then while working around the house. These comments are not complete and it is not now necessary for my purposes to pay closer attention to this interview now. Perhaps after completing the reading of the book I will listen to it with more care and under conditions that will permit better concentration.

One of the interesting minor points is that James Harris said he represented The New York Review of Books.

To me the most interesting of what I've heard is his exculpation at the beginning of both Humes and McCloy. With Humes he said the machine proves that Humes was telling the truth when the proof that Humes had lied and knew he was lying when he made the statement in question is public.

Bud knows this yet has been associated with O'Toole from the beginning and in the promotion of this book and in an article in the NYReview.

This tape can be used to destroy the PSE in my opinion. It certainly is more than enough to disprove the validity of the use in this book and to raise new questions about the book and its sponsorship.

Dicks question did Penthouse finance his work.

Flugs Epstein's focus on Warren as responsible for the whitewash.

There are touches throughout that so closely parallel how I have responded to the same questions that the conclusion he has paid close attention to what I have said is raised. Obviously I have no way of knowing.

However, the anti-me part is apparent as it is as far as I've gone in the book.

There are places where he fixes upon the identical words I used, as in the taxi incident at the bus station, where he also refers to the woman who was about to take the cab in which Oswald is said to have been as "a little old lady." Even is this is a direct quote of Whaley using the same words on which I fixed of all those he could have used is against the law of averages.

On the 1/27/64 transcript he here also refers to it as "recently declassified by the government," saying no more about it. Where he goes out of his way to seem to give credit to others, as Epstein and Bob Smith and in the book quotes from others what I first said, his departure from a scheme is provocative at least.

Guiccone "has staffed an extensive investigation to make this public." (intro of Guiccone.)

G. calls it "sweeping investigation." Dates at period "when the Watergate investigation was breaking wide open." But he also has nothing to say about who financed this supposed two years of extensive work and all that travel. He has instead a quite excessive description of O'Toole as the man who...

Despite WWIV O'Toole opens with my work on Russel, but omits me and refers to when Russell went public "in 1970." Penthouse had WWIV and O'Toole knew the story whatever his source. That it is not the result of research is proven by the date.

He refers to new information in support that will appear in three weeks but declines to identify his own article (with Bud) in NYReview on the ground he does not have the editor's approval. That is a reason?

On Humes, "He was asked" about his conclusions and the answer was, "No, we think that stand up very well..." O'Toole: "There is no doubt in my mind that he believed essentially what he told the Warren Commission." O'T surprised because he was suspicious only over burning of protocol.

When he gets to McCloy he also exculpates the staff from this machine.

HW 4/1/75

Dear Jim,

4/1/75

Last night you repeated to me Bud's relaying of a proposition from Guiccone of Penthouse that you and I be rewarded suitably and financially for Penthouse having from Jimmy Ray what is represented as his story. I was shocked by the gross impropriety of the entire matter, by its contrast with Bud's record when I had arranged for an entirely ~~totally~~ different kind of interview and by the fact that in effect he was asking us to get Jimmy to enter what has to amount to a guilty plea in order to be publishable in any form in that kind of magazine. I asked you to make a complete record and to date it for our and Ray's protection and not to use against Bud.

As soon as we finished talking I felt I had to inform Jim McKinley. First I had a long call from a college student and then I made two unsuccessful efforts to reach Jim. Later he called me and I told him this story. It shocked him also. I felt that because of the past (several ways) and the manner in which Bud personally had abused Jim and Playboy I had to inform Jim. I also wanted to talk to him to learn if he had any word from Norman with regard to Post Mortem.

This past includes Bud's personally breaking up an entirely harmless interview with Ray about the conditions of his confinement, the details preserved in voluminous correspondence, on the spurious ground that I would be paid and this would be wrong, both false. It also includes the breaching of my confidence, again with Penthouse, with regard to the transcript printed in Whitewash IV. You have personal knowledge of this and that I had entirely different plans Bud thus pre-empted.

I have made this record while informing you because you should know that I felt the obligation to inform Jim. I told him I felt the people I had dealt with recently ought to know but not for any public use and not for use against Bud.

It is an odd coincidence that when I phoned you a little after 11 a.m. yesterday I told you, based on other matters connected with Guiccone, Penthouse and O'Toole I was finding it increasingly impossible to content myself with explanations that Bud is merely irrational on the subject of political assassinations. I regard what he was part of in this instance as a gross violation of his client's rights as an attorney can be capable of. Even if he knows us well enough to know that we can't be bribed that he would even relay such a proposition is in itself personally insulting to me and I think an outrage. The immediate problem I see is that there is no safe way of letting Jimmy know and I'm not certain that the needs of his defense permit it. If there were any means by which those expenses Bud has met could be met I'd want to tell Jimmy this personally and other things of like nature some of which I think he may well suspect.

Jim will be letting us know in a few days when he'll be coming. We would prefer to interview us together. I told him it would be impossible for me to make those trips to Washington and I felt it would be impossible for you to come here those days. I still have six of yesterday's orders to complete. This kind of work is extraordinarily time consuming. Fortunately and unfortunately it is regular. However, while I don't want to put all that extra mileage on my car maybe I'll have to let some orders accumulate and other work go. But I hate to think of it. I haven't had a chance to reread the 1/22 transcript or to read Malone's decision at all. The pressure I feel to get this work done had me awake a little after three this morning. I did stay in bed until 5 but I really ought not be putting these kinds of hours in. I'm too tired. What I am saying is that maybe I'll change from what I told Jim but I know I should not.

Jim knows our New York schedule. He will be here and have the interviews completed before then.

We now have what I regard as a rather desperate situation in which the two senior and experienced counsel for all practical purposes want to sell their client out. They now both want Jimmy, who claims to be innocent and who is proven innocent by the evidence, to plead guilty, Bud by what amounts to an out-of-court public "confession." The one thing I can think of is that Bill should know.

Best,