5/25/72

Dear James,

Things were more hectic than usual on my return home. There were two deaths in the family, an uncle and a brother-in-law, and my wife fell and sprained her ankle, so I'm behind on everything. By the time I could go to Washington, Bud was out of town. so I filled Jim in on the interviews I conducted as a basis for the affidavits. He seems to agree that the results are pretty good. It was not possible for him to meet me at the plane and debrief me, as we usually try to do, because he had a legal conference of some kind on matters not related to you and me. He is also too busy, in legal research and other matters, to dub off the tapes with me what is needed for transcribing for the affidavits, so that will now take a bit more time, but I think it should be done instead of me trying to draft the affidavits because lawyers may see value in what I may not, and there is much material with much detail. Meanwhile, I am also spending a fair amount of time gathering information and evidence in support of the affidavits. It is surprising how much there is when one works backward.

Today's mail has not yet come, so I do not know if you have written me. I had expected to get a list of names that was to have been given to you to forward to me. These can be important, so please do not let it slip. I want to have them before I try to carry that part forward. You may remember I discussed this immediately with Jim. We have since discussed it in more detail and legally it may be significant.

I heard from Jerry yesterday. He has a temporary location while he looks for a job. He was supposed to have taken Carol and Albert to see John the weekend of the 13th but they couldn't get to do it. Because they had not written John, I did yesterday to give him, as easily as I could, a view of his present legal situation. A petition cert. has been filed with the U.S.Supreme Court. I am afraid that because the initial legal work was so bad it can't adequately be described, John may have few options if this fails. Until we get to study the petition, we can have no solid opinion, but the length alone convinces me that if not for John because of the great importance of the legal issue the court-appointed lawyer tried hard. If you can get the appeals court decision and read it I am sure you will understand.

I don't know if I have explained my working methods to you, so briefly, I will, for they do require more time. However, in my opinion, they make the end result more dependable, and in this case more mistakes than most can survive have already been made. I go into greater detail than most people. Among the two more obvious possibilities are these: if the person I am interviewing is not dependable or has a faulty recollection or is over-anxious, there is a better chance of catching it; and the detail adds credibility to the story. One of the directions I have taken since I saw you is gathering confirmation of these details. I tape and I take notes. The best mind can't recall everything nor can it always recall with complete accuracy. This means much more work, but it also reduces the possibility of either omission or error to the absolute minimum. Had this been done with you and John to begin with, you'd both have walked. With regard to the current tapes, I want to preserve them undamaged, untouched, and all of their content does not require transcribing, so this means that dubs have to be made of what should be transcribed. But to begin with, I first make notes of what I didn t note during the interviews and then I get to the interview notes and type them and then I get to the tapes, which will not forget as the mind can. I am now at the point of retyping the handwritten notes. I explain this so you can expect a certain amount of delay, but I am sure that when you see what the result is you will agree it is worth it. These affidavits will be absolutely solid and I think that aside from their major purpose, the legal one, you will get a certain amount of pleasure from them and their sunstantiation.

You mentioned a school-boy to me. I don't know if you know what kind of sport he is, but I have a hazy recollection of his record on the field. If it is correct, I don't think he plays the game by the rules. In that game, I prefer those who do and do not trust those who do not. They are always subject to temptation. Sincerely, Harold Weisberg