

3/2/71

Dear Wayne,

This very hasty note because of one important thing and to fill you in on a couple in strictest confidence.

Do not tell anyone I saw Ray. He was quite helpful and could not have been more friendly or, under the circumstances, more at ease. There is no doubt, no possibility of any doubt, that he was at the De Soto. He described it perfectly, its layout, its location, how he got there, and why. However, my deduction as to how and why he got there is wrong. I believe his version. If and when the time comes, I think I can produce a witness for you to interview and I already have official misconduct that in almost any other city would make a major scandal.

It was important to have the stats of Green. That is not the right guy. Not only did he say he did not recognize Green, but his face, which I was watching carefully, disclosed no sign of recognition.

So, the favor I am going to ask, and ask that you do it in confidence, letting me have it for the disclosure under the proper circumstances and at the right time, is this: go to the Texaco station and make careful inquiry. Ray says he left going north, turned right, found this gas station, could not get the tire fixed because they were too busy, had some air put in it, and went back. This is not all, and I've not time for all, but it hangs together very well by itself and much more, with what I developed independently.

Please tell nobody except Bob Livingston what you learn, if anything, including if you learn nothing. Especially do not use it in bargaining or any other way with Thompson. However, I suggest that you keep notes that would not only help me but make any testimony that might be asked of you more credible. My purpose is not to withhold anything from Thompson but to develop as many levels as I can to keep him in particular to the straight and narrow. I would encourage them to ask you to testify, when they are underway and have established that they are going to be completely responsible. You would then have a very good first-person story and I would help with it and amplify, as I now can and perhaps by then can more. This may be one of the pivotal points in the ultimate unravelling, so I am offering you and your paper more than you may perhaps now realize. And what I am saying is that I now have what I can let you have and more, what I cannot let you have, and that I expect to have more in the future that I do not want to be jeopardized by any premature disclosure, which could certainly foreclose.

I would also like to try and get you into the position of a kind of informal public-relations adviser to Hawks, if you could without complication do this and if your paper would not object. I think he needs counsel, may not realize it, and I would hope it would be as responsible as possible, not sensation-seeking. I am really persuaded that the most conservative and careful approach will, in the end, yield even more sensation, and that it will be synergized with the utmost care in the approach and manner of the entire thing.

I have to get to typing my notes, and I fall apart as soon as I got home, so I've no time for more now. Thanks for everything,

Sincerely,