

4/2/69

Dear Steve,

I've gotten up early to answer your letter of 3/25 and a number of others I could not get to yesterday. Wish I had more time, for I'd like to go over more with you, perhaps treat some points at greater length. (I sent the radio, insured, a week ago).

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You begin with Kunkin, so I do also. I suggest you not write him the letter you plan, and that your reason for wanting to write it is not a constructive one. I have not always succeeded, but basically, I have felt that with all there is to do, we should eschew that which is not calculated to serve a constructive purpose. Further, if you do write such a letter, when, in the future, you can take a more impersonal view of the past and present, you will be embarrassed, for some of the responsibility you do not now assume really is yours.

On the second page, where you quote Dulles, you acknowledge that one of the essentials of intelligence is analysis. This you never did and more, when you kept getting suggestions from one whose judgement you knew you should at least consider, you failed to, I think refused to. Had you at any time in the past year made an independent analysis, your entire course of action would have been different. For that year, Jim and I have barely been on speaking terms. I have complaints against him that are serious. Yet I have written no such letters as you visualize, and I will not unless it becomes necessary. If that does happen, I'll write more than a letter. I want you not to suffer ~~xxx~~ more: he hasn't changed. He will make - has already made - exactly the same mistakes in exactly the same way and for precisely the same reasons. The defective indictment of Shaw, too hasty at best, is one example. I warned him of the defects in the Shaw indictment the first week of 11/68, and he did nothing. There are two solid perjury charges against Shaw he should have used when Shaw was on the stand and didn't, and didn't include in his new indictment, yet it was all in his possession (for other reasons), for I had given it to him. This is simply a thoroughly professional incompetence.

So, ask yourself, is your motive a not-isolated, not understood vanity, a concern for your own face, and a shedding of your own share of the blame? Or, do you think you may later, with more dispassion possible, feel this might have been the case? If so, you will suffer from writing such a letter. If you feel you must, I suggest you assail Art because he has been an uncritical sycophant, of Jim as of Mark. As an editor, he should have found it obvious that Mark was just whoring around, did nothing but use the material of others, repeat what JG said in a way calculated to promote himself and nothing else. May I, parenthetically, remind you that his sheet has yet to mention me for the first time, yet during this same period of time he knew I had brought out a pair of new books he entirely failed to mention (He still owes me for the PW's he ordered in your presence, has yet to mention them in his add for his own bookstores. Please try and get him to pay me, including shipping costs. He has not answered my letters on this, either.)

We have all, in varying degrees, been sycophants. My understanding began in my 11/67 trip and more, as a consequence of it. Jim is basically dishonest. He may call it Randism, I call it dishonesty.

He and Mark are close not only because Mark thought it was to his benefit but because philosophically they share the same fundamental dishonesty.

The charges you make against "the office" are incomplete and wrongly formulated. The charge must be against Jim. You must come to understand the incompleteness. Dishonesty must be added, and sickness. I've tried to warn you of sickness for a year. And it is more than "yes men". All these were selfish, seeking personal gain, not truth. If I disagree with the publicity (and I did, on a number of occasions, unsuccessfully try to stop it), I can understand why he could have sincerely believed it necessary.

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When you list your own errors you are also incomplete. The two more important of those you omit are a lack of independence and a refusal to consider what you were told. These and the ~~ix~~ others led you into what you would not, in my opinion, have done independently, and some were plain dishonest. The change in you from 2/68 to 10/68 was very disturbing to me. I had arranged, in advance of 10/68, to introduce you to someone who could have been of help and value to you. When I observed what I did, I did not do this. You have yet to undo some of what you then did, a minor thing being to set things straight with the people at Senate Barbara. I even asked this of you. You have damaged me there needlessly. You did not even tell me the truth about the arrangements. I found them out from others after I left. Unsolicited. If I do not give you a bill of particulars on your performance, it is not because I cannot. Therefore, I again suggest a deeper soul-searching. Frankly, I think part of it is an uncritical following of what you may have taken to be orders, but why is not as important as what.

When you say "investigation was too often in the wrong direction" you utter the monumental understatement. It was almost invariably that. The only viable leads out there were first, mishandled and then ruined. Need I remind you how Hall and Howard were first mishandled and then handled incompetently? Jim's vanity would never let him forget that after he did the wrong thing, attacked them in advance and they went to court and whipped him, I went out and got them to cooperate - and he then still failed to get a single thing from them. Almost everything else was what overflows from a malfunctioning toilet. Even Broshears. I knew of him a year before you all got interested in him and didn't take the time to see him. His story is irrational and if it were not he could not be credited. If you knew of his conduct in N.O. you'd understand this. And what did he cost? Could that money have been spent in any serious way that would not have returned a greater yield? You see, you still do not understand what was not done in N.O., what the glitter of all this tinsel elsewhere did to the local situation. There, to this moment, nothing save the inadequacy of Shaw has been done that I did not do, and what I left developed was ignored and discovered remains but discovered. A large part of this does point to Shaw. No, you cannot say you have no apologies on Hall, and Howard, for you stood in my way there when I tried to straighten it out again, or on Broshears, who there is still no reason to believe at all. What I am addressing here is a simple thing: you have not analyzed your own position enough, have not eliminated what may in the future trouble you.

There are other things, too. For example, when I wrote and told you not to send Jaffe off on Kroman, you did, very expensively. Need I point out we had someone much more competent on the scene, or how this money might better have been spent?...Your neck is less chopped than you think. But the fault is entirely your own, as ultimately you will see. Do not, from disappointment or vanity, over-react, now. You are correct to be concerned about avoiding involvement. Continue to be aware and resist....I've run out of time and I must leave you to puzzle the typos. You've come along well, but not far enough. Try to depersonalize. Best.

CITIZENS' COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY

BOX 150 • 308 WESTWOOD PLAZA

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90024

STEVEN J. BURTON, National Chairman

Dear Harold,

25 March 1968

Thanks for your note.

Re: Little radio — please send it insured
so I'll collect my \$30.00 investment. I'm
not in a position to take such a loss.

Yes, I'm doing a lot of soul-searching.
Munkin is doing exactly what I am not.
When he finishes, I plan, as a former
J.G. investigator, to write a letter. Too bad
if it embarrasses Jim — he did that — I didn't.

Some tentative conclusions: We know
what went wrong in The Office — yes-men, incompetence,
bad judgment, publicity games, etc.

With me — too much weight on personality,
rhetoric, promises, display of confidence, and
agreement with my opinions regarding C.I.A.,
Warren, Hoover, etc. I still hold the same opinions
basically, but because someone agrees with me is
no reason to trust him.

Investigation was too often in the wrong
direction. Namely, hypothesis lead to attempts
to link with e.g. CIA, not 11/22/63.

Know what I mean? CIA, Right wing, FBI,
etc. is not synonymous with assassination - but
in Jim's (and others) mind it was.

I would still investigate Brooker,
Howard, Hall, etc etc as I did. No apologies
there. ~~They~~

Intelligence, as Dulles says, is the gathering,
analysis, and dispersion of information. The
most serious flaw was in analysis. The other
two left a lot to be desired as well.

I learned a lot. On a personal level.
But I have the feeling now that I'm not a cat -
I stuck my neck out once and it came off.
Hope I don't overreact and avoid involvement
rather than simply be more cautious.

Enough. Hope all is ok. Books under
way separately.

Bert,

Steve