

4/10/72

Dear Bud and Jim,

My hunch on what Stoner was up to was right, but I didn't expect it to be in spades. Instead of waiting until I come in on Friday, I'll make a trip into town to mail this and the enclosed carbons of my letter to him and to Jerry. I have decided to write him via Jerry, that is, to send the letter to him to Jerry for Jerry to read and give to him. It will then be up to Jerry and it may give us an added reading on both. Nothing could be more suspicious.

I suppose it has been about a month since he told Jerry he would give me those leads, once he was assured that I would not use anything against him, the excuse he gave Jerry for not giving them to me. What he has done, actually, is to delay until his letter could not reach me in time for me to write James before he sees James. Jerry also wrote me on the 7th, saying that Stoner was going to see James today or tomorrow. Neither letter could have reached me before today, so if I had the intention of writing James, it would not be physically possible.

There are two other possibly strange circumstances. Jerry told me that Stoner was writing me the same day but did not indicate knowledge of what Stoner would write. And whereas Jerry could have driven Stoner there is perhaps less time than the use of planes and certainly at less cost, the indications in Jerry's letter is that he was not taking Stoner. He has told me that Stoner doesn't like to drive. Of course, he could have Jerry take him to the airport and have one of his boys meet him at Knoxville. But when Jerry makes the trip by car without speeding in four hours, and it takes an hour from the airport in Knoxville at least, more if time for getting and returning a rental car is considered, some time to get to the Marietta airport even if there is a direct flight, when all the time is added together, it sure is strange that, if he has so arranged it, Stoner is seeing James without Jerry present, especially because, having assumed he would drive Stoner (one of his jobs for Stoner), I had earlier written Jerry urging him to try and get to see James and to have Stoner talk to the warden. I told you of this yesterday.

From this record, I find it hard to find a way in which Stoner could have fingered himself more than he has.

I suggest that it is time to ask Group Research for everything they have on all of his people, esp. in La. At this point we can't make any assumptions of innocence or non-involvement. It will be interesting to see James' reaction. I have a letter to mail him. I'll tell him the essence. I will presume Stoner has. I'll enclose a copy.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg