

February 12, 1969

Mr. Philip Geraci III
2201 Green Acres Road
Metairie, La.

Dear Philip,

Persuant to our earlier meeting at the Cohen home, I had expected to hear from you and I had expected to be in touch with you when I was again in New Orleans. The latter, because of the urgency of other work, was not possible.

I am writing because I have not heard from you. It is my recollection you were to do two things: obtain the return of what had been loaned the Jeff Parish Sheriff's Office and prepare a memo on that strange incident of your being removed from Orleans Parish the morning after Ferris's death. I will explain the importance of these things to you.

One question I forgot to ask you: did the FBI or Liebler, before your testimony was taken, ever ask you about your membership in the CAP cadets, or whether you knew Ferris? Were there then any questions along this line?

By this time you should understand that my intentions include no harm to you and that I may have avoided considerable embarrassment for you and your family. This is not in any way inconsistent with my search for the truth, to the degree it today can be recaptured. You also have enough to permit you to understand that the official obligations were hardly discharged, that the investigations, at best, left much to be desired. You have had what you regard as a patriotic motivation. Please consider this also in that light.

However, when people, especially young people, are caught up on the swirl and tide of great events, no matter how innocently, they often are without understanding of the significance of knowledge they may have. You may know some fact, yet be without comprehension of its real significance. At the same time, this knowledge can present a hazard to others, those aware of its meaning. If there is hazard, it is in being the sole possessor of such information, for then a purpose is served by threats and an attempt to harm. I was apprehensive, as was Mrs. Cohen, about your father's death because he could have testified to things that may have been unwelcome to others. We knew and understood this. The timing of this unfortunate accident also pointed that way.

Therefore, I repeat, in your personal interest and in the national interest, my request that you note anything that has occurred to you since our interview, regardless of you slight its connection may seem to be. If it seems to have significance, if you want, as during the interview, I will explain it. In addition, I emphasize the potential importance of that strange business of spiriting you out of Orleans Parish for a week just when Ferris died, if his was a natural death. I have checked, as I told you, and this not only had no connection with the District Attorney's office, but the promise made you and your mother, that the tape recording would be given them, was not kept.

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So, we begin with the understanding that you were lied to, as was your family, possible including the uncle with whom you stayed.

We bear in mind the remarkable coincidence of the timing, with Ferrie's death as he was about to be charged with a very serious crime.

Next, we address the reasons given you. As you, yourself, realized, ~~the investigation~~ that the young women in whom there was such interest is hardly a candidate for the role in which they sought to cast her. This cannot possibly be the reason for interest in her. Nor can the other seeming object of their interest, for you pointed out your period in the CAP was after Ferrie's, and this, certainly, was known to those who questioned you. So, it becomes clear they had other reasons. It therefore is important to know what their reasons were, and this becomes important to you, particularly because, regardless of the outcome of the current trial, that same knowledge can jeopardize others.

One way we can learn this is by the questions asked of you. This is why I asked you to try and recall those and your answers and to put them on paper. With the trial in progress, this is even more important, for whichever way the decision goes, there can be increased jeopardy. Also, things are happening outside of New Orleans that have the potential of focusing ever greater interest on this, please believe me. This is why I am not now there.

Please try and understand how unusual it is for a policeman of one jurisdiction to exercise authority in another jurisdiction, how exceptional it is for him to be accompanied by an officer of that jurisdiction who, of all the many police, is one who knew Ferrie and in the way this one did. The lies told you that you report are of a kind to excite interest. When, to this, you add the knowledge that all the reasons given you were false, I think you can begin to understand that this was in every way both important and far out of the ordinary.

Therefore, again I urge you to waste no time making as complete a record as possible of this entire incident, with names, places, times, questions asked and answers given, and any impressions you then had or deductions you later made. This can be of enormous importance to you and for your protection and I do believe it can be also for the country.

Please do this and the other things you promised, completely and rapidly. You can do it on tape if you find writing uncongenial. Whatever way you do it, please be thorough.

You also should know, if I didn't tell you, that Brown had connection with the most dubious people, including killers, had been and may still be an intelligence agent, and was for a while in the employ, in this connection, of a major publication. I neither know nor pretend to know what he gave them. I do know that in his ostensible role he seems not to have earned his pay. I also have reason to believe that every name he got appears on lists somewhere.

I do hope you will regard this as urgent, Philip, for it certainly can be, especially for you.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

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