

4/2/97

Dear Gerry,

Most FBI agents are Hoover clones. They are selected by those he selected of those selected by those he selected. I believe that the nonsense spouted off to you is part of their indoctrination.

Besides which their lives are easier for them if they believe that guff, as probably most do.

He should know better than he told you because he spent those years in the FBI. It believed that it did not require any permission to bug. It did for wire tapping but it wiretapped without asking for permission and even after it asked for and did not get permission.

That is how it appears in so many bank-robbery files: the FBI tapped Jerry Ray, who phoned me and was picked up.

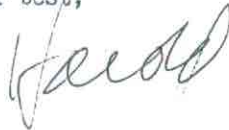
Makes no sense but it is so.

Those ^{who} live and work in that environment have to adjust to it or get out.

This means believing what they've been told and that the FBI is always right no matter how wrong it is.

I suppose that after three decades of it the adaptation is permanent.

Our best,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Herald".

Dear Harold,

Mar. 31, 1997

Last week a Mr. George Hutchinson from England contacted me about obtaining a copy of Hoax. I had a secretary here make a copy of the CD and sent it to him, along with a few items from that course I taught a couple years ago on Case Closed.

Toward the middle of last week I also had an interesting, and somewhat disturbing, encounter with a retired FBI Special Agent who was conducting a background check on a former student of mine who is applying for a job in the legal department of the Immigration & Naturalization Service in Miami. It just so happens that this^{was} black student who had taken several courses, including a course I taught several years ago on the FBI and the Civil Rights Movement. Jerry McKnight came down here that Jan. '90 to speak to the class. He had also taken a special topics course I taught on King and Malcolm X. So, we got to talking about the FBI of the 1960's -- he (James Schempp) joined in 1964 and was sent to South Carolina to monitor and keep in check KKK activity. Naturally, he defended the agency's work and thought the FBI had done a good job. He was also insistent on defending Hoover. Regarding Hoover and King, he told me Hoover actually agreed with King when King criticized the FBI for not having more agents from the North working on civil rights cases in the South. That is not my understanding -- King's criticism was received with anger and defensiveness, as I recall.

When I raised the subject of the FBI bugging King's hotel rooms, he claimed Hoover could not have done that without higher authorization -- either from the Attorney General or the President. I know of no such authorization (only that for wire-tapping SCLC headquarters and his home phone). Of course, he went on to note that King had advisors with Communist backgrounds. And although he praised King's non-violence, he also referred to him as "absolutely amoral",

which to me raises a couple questions: how much he knew of the FBI bugging operation (did agents share this information amongst themselves), and who made the FBI the arbiter of morality? Of course, I did not press the issue out of concern for the student whose background he was checking into.

What is disturbing is this "close-ranks" mentality I have perceived among the few former agents I have had any contact with. That their former leader, Hoover, has been unfairly maligned. Actually, I believe the criticism has been understated.

And to top this off, I also was disturbed by some comments a visiting historian was making to a class on recent American History about the Warren Commission and single-bullet theory. Some of his students, who I also have in another class, reported this to me. So, I wrote to him and sent him a copy of that Arlen Specter article I wrote a few years ago. I also called his attention to Wrone's bibliography. He called me a few days later and said he would like to have lunch with me. His name is Dewey Grantham, and he has written several books, mostly on the South. Given his background, perhaps I will be able to interest him further by using your "Senator Russell Dissents" to show him that it is not just me or other critics who disagree with the single-bullet theory, but a highly respected member of the Warren Commission itself (and a true Southerner). I will let you know how it goes.

Best,

