

1/6/68

Dear Dick,

Your 12/30, postmarked 2/1, arrived today, with the enclosed undated Sprague letter. Both are important.

First I address the handwritten note you returned. Perhaps it is Murr, but I think you are interested in the Paris Match pictures. That note says "I think the identity of the French photographer with Lady Jean Campbell is in CD 1281 (Ex 1354 or 5), Paul Mathian 22H548".

A general comment: none of us is without error. The work we do is in a field designed to induce and facilitate it, against people who are skilled in arranging it and entraping. So, you will understand that first of all, I can be wrong, and second, when I criticize the conclusions of others, it is in no sense negative or derogatory.

Penn, who is a great, incorruptible and valiant guy, is inclined to shbot from the hip, not check things out, and confabulate. Dick is quite imaginative. He see what I cannot on things that have yet to be established and, unless I am wrong, cannot be (as for example the Tramp pictures and the various positive identifications made of those in it, without any of the most basic work being done). If we kept back on some of these things, the record would not be comforting. A tremendous amount of time and effort has gone this way, and to the enormous degree Garrison and his office have been involved in it, it has been ruinous. I cannot give more detail of this by this too-public means.

Frankly, I cannot believe any mature, experience man would have gone for what evolved as "Farewell America" even before he saw it. I do not see how anyone knowing anything at all about the material could credit it after reading it. I was in open disbelief (and not popular for it) as far back as February, when the reports had it an NKVD thing. I read part 3 in the summer and knew it was a fake as soon as I did, scholarly and polished or not. Stop and think for a moment: here are the guys who had access to one of the assassins in Mexico City. So, with this marvelous source, they have a single page of type-script on the assassination - and that will not stand alone or at all! Yet you should have heard such people as Garrison hold forth on it! He pissed away a fortune on it and it may yet cause a mistrial for him. That I will not have time to go into save to indicate it is with what the movie says and of the involvement of those connected with him with the movie.

Nor can I understand how men who have lived a few years in this world could begin to believe so elaborate a plot with so many unnecessary conspirators was necessary, or that the people allegedly involved would be so vulnerable. Their number alone guaranteed that. It just could not be. With individuals, it is so illogical as to be insane. It was all bait for us, and so many took it so avidly. Hunt. What an ideal selection, and Cohn, with their histories! Much too obvious manufacture, much too perfectly tailored. Naturally, Penn would go for it no matter what else it said if it went after Hunt. He believed that before the book.

These guys take whatever Garrison says as the given word. They are uncritical, do not do their own thinking (and too often he does none at all). Why the very means by which the ms was sent him should have made a very young

and entirely inexperienced youth have questions. When I had them in February, in California, where it first surfaced (in real nut country, and I do not mean the radical right alone) and asked a few of our boys to do a few counter-intelligence things, like getting a few pictures of people, instead of doing it they told the subject - and never told me they did this or would not do what I asked. I cannot begin to tell what that alone cost, how ruinous it may by now have been. I am shocked that Sprague could have read the entire book and been ecstatic. I then read one part and almost puked because I knew its excited acceptance. The "information" he says "they have been providing ever since" is the kind of stuff that overflows toilets - not a damned bit of it any good at all. The two "investigators" who were sent to "Geneva and Paris" were Los Angeles kids, one stupid, sycophantic but ~~was~~ dedicated - the one who told the guy whose picture I asked him to take. He came back after a wonderful vacation with nothing but excrement he alchemized into diamonds. The other was on a vacation paid for by his father. Both carried Garrison credentials, another stupidity I have since been able to bring to an end. The second is a very fine young man, now 19 and excellent and mature for those years. He was conned. As recently as November he would not listen to me. He has since changed 100%, and 100% too late.

But when Sprague says they are Xformer French intelligence he says something I did not know. Can you get any details on this? I fear he will not find my opinions welcome, whether he has now changed his mind or not. Garrison has and so have the boys, both.

Aside: if nothing else, the concept of the book make me believe it is CIA. It uses a hackneyed device, if you stop and think. His, incidently, was my opinion before I saw any of it, so I could be reading things in that may not be justified.

No reread Sprague's conjectures on why the books were not mailed out! And the paragraph that follows. How could he possibly know this, save by taking the judgement of others whose judgement he should already have held in question, and taking that blindly? Aside from his own self-decit in his reading. Why he is in possession of photographic proof that establishes the invalidity of the book. He swallowed the crap about their having a photographer on the scene, decided that must have been the "abushka lady" (no more unlikely or conspicuous person is possible).

This is not to run Dick down at all. He has done fine work, and I have turned over to him what I could, helped as I could. But if an experienced man can go this hog wild, where are we?

May I also suggest to you that anything Joesten is for you should question on that basis alone? He is irresponsible, a literary thief, a fictioner without conscience and dubious principle. He makes it up as he goes, stealing what he can, without even benefit of the 26, unless he has gotten them very recently.

My immediate interest, let me explain, is counterintelligence and prevention, in the event some of this surfaces in the trial. Therefore, I ask that when you send me anything, please include envelopes, if for only the stamps, because some day I might have to write this.

December 11 Lamarre could have been in either New York or Montreal, with Jaffe. I picked them both up at their New Orleans hotel the morning of the 9th. They left for New York midday, planned to go to Montreal Wednesday. By then he had already had a great shock when Vince Salandria blew his cool and his stack and may have ruined excellent chances for getting to the bottom of the whole thing. That is another tale.

My kindness to them that morning yielded high dividends in information. I was able, for example, to establish the worst, the very wrong connections Lamarre has. Sorry, I cannot detail by this means. Vince made any further effort by me a futility. Lamarre will never again talk to me because he connects me with Vince, who was really terrible and paranoid. Also stupid. He called them both CIA agents, to their faces! Not that he knew anything, for he didn't, not a blessed thing!

The name Sutto you mention is new to me. Can you please get me all the details, if only from legal directories? Have you any way of getting any data on the firm? (Remarkable, a French law firm with the great coincidence of a 1066 phone number! Have they defended any of the extremists, the bombers?)

In short, Dick, not a single detail or fact you can get is too inconsequential. This is not French intelligence. It is intelligence. It is well-financed and cannot return the investment.

When you next tell me that Thompson actually does have Z, and I know they have Z in the movie of "Farewell", can you imagine how much you excite me? My initial reaction, when I read the SEPost contraction of his book, was that if he were not CIA they got their best job free. How many sources do you think there are for the Z film? Where could it have been "stolen" or obtained? Not from LIFE, the Archives or the FBI. That left only the CIA or, as you now say, Thompson had it. I was trying to learn from Lamarre whether they had 210 when Vince crabbled it. That would have pinpointed more. However, I think may have had access to either version at LIFE, the copy being the more likely. LIFE also had a first copy, made in Dallas, and a black and white, made from the undamaged original, in Chicago. Your analysis indicates he is no closer than second generation, copy of the copy of the copy original at closest. But when you get to Trenton, carefully as you can, you know what to seek. Do not disclose any of this, for that will turn him (them) off.

You are right about Willis, but I am certain he is out of range by w 206. The rest of your paragraph interests me much. You realize I have been saying this from the first. But you reach your conclusions by other means entirely. Please do outline it. I remember, I've had another book that also goes into this done for a year and a half, POST MORTEM. I have some of the secret stuff indicating a hit much earlier than your lowest figure.

I cannot imagine Popkin's silence if he has such pictures. I'd love them for COUP D'ETAT, which deals with all the assassinations, written in June and saying much of what Huie has since said. Trent also saw Huie. I have a friend whose judgement I have learned to trust pretty much who evaluates Huie as a very competent and equally bad man personally.... There is no end to the identities Sprague has for "Frenchy"... Another guess is that Huie got scared and will not deal with any of us. ... Now on those tramp pictures; I have information I cannot vouch for but from a source who has the means of learning, that the arrests, if they were really arrested, were made other than at the TSBD. It was at the back of the Post Office. My Dallas phonebook tells me there is the "terminal" station at 207 S. Houston, certainly the closest. My map of Dallas tells me there is no street between Houston and the RR tracks at this point. Therefore, had the arrest been made there, the likely path would have been up the tracks to the Triple, thence to the police cars at the TSBD. I am more willing to believe this than anything I have heard from anyone else, none of which has any meaningful substantiation. Only endless wishful thinking and confabulation....

Is it not likely that Hoover got his pitch from Frazier, that they all assumed putting the sight back in exactly the same place (and how could they do otherwise?) led them to assume it would sight exactly the same way? You have to

look to who took the sight off. If I were making nominations, one, certainly, would be Day. Another the agent, I think Drain, who took it to DC. Is it not odd there is no record of any question being asked about this? Looking forward to your tracing that down.

Perhaps "Farewell" will be hurtful. I think if this is the case, we'll know at the trial, hence my acute interest in all I can get. I have some of the European names involved. Now I wish I'd followed the student protests against Springer better. Did they claim he was CIA by any chance? However, there is also the possibility it afforded us for a little intellectual judo. It has been applied. We'll have ~~to~~ to wait and see with what result, if any. Further explanation will have to await possible future more direct contact.

Which reminds me: when you are in Trenton, if you are driving, you are only a little over three hours from here in light-traffic times. There is dual highway, mostly expressway, to three miles from our home. It's an invitation.

It is after my late bedtime, but let me bring you up to date on a few things. Today, Shaw's lawyers made three motions, one for a change of venue, to be argued Friday, one to quash, and one for the continuance of bail during the trial, which was unopposed. The judge has announced court will sit from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. daily, with an hour and a half off for lunch - six days a week. Resting on the 7th means court from 1:30-5:30 p.m. That will be rough. Today Leemans voluntarily gave Garrison's office an affidavit saying he lied on the NBC show because he and his family had been repeatedly, anonymously threatened. He said those threatening him were followed by Internal Revenue agents who leaned and fortified, that, following the telephoned "advice", he went to Irwin Dymond, Shaw's lawyer, who told him to call day or night if he needed help, not to worry about bail, etc. He saw Dymond, who funnelled him to S Heriden, who taped him in Aaron Kohn's office, with Dymond present. He said he regretted the harm he had done an innocent assistant DA named Lee, who he had said, had bribed him. He said his conscience had been bothering him.

I expect to go to New Orleans about a week before the beginning of the trial and to be there through it. The pictures and X-rays have again been subpoenaed, and there may be a court hearing on that in Washington very soon. I do not know what Garrison has on Shaw. I know only what I know and believe. I am satisfied he is Bertrand.

Dick, a word not intended as derogation: leasr to evaluate those of us with whom you are in touch. Some are not really solid workers, do not really stay on the ground. This doesn't mean they are not fine people, dedicated, willing, often doing important things. It does mean that some sure as hell tear off in all directions carrying too many too often with them. The influence of several such on Garrison was enormous--and very hurtful. They kept him from his hogwork, holding out great rewards in solving everything and becoming a great hero, and he trusted and believed them. So, remarkably little work was done in the one area he has jurisdiction. I believe that Bradley-Crisman stuff is crap, and so do I regard all their phoney preachers, Negell, all that stuff he went for and spoke of as though he had personally verified it. He is one of the most trusting men in the world, with an unfeeling instinct for the wrong people. The wonder is he didn't ruin everything before this and from this. I do not believe Boxley was still CIA, as Jim charged, but to me it makes no difference. He could not have done more harm had he been. Turner was in the same boat. Between them not a single verified thing that can go to court, and endless diarrhea of attractive fictions, and a monster diversion that weakens the case now coming up. Did they have to be agents? Is it not enough if they are sick, or wrong or anything else? Their record is clawless. Not a single worthwhile thing, and they account for the expenditure of most of his time, money and effort.

All of this is strictly between us, unless you are face to face with Gary Murr. No others.

By the way, if and when you get the French version of "Farewell", see if you can interpret the dedications and credits, which are first-names for the U.S.

The movie was originally scheduled for 11/22/68, <sup>L.A.</sup> It did not come off. It did not arrive. Lemarre said he would fly with it personally and then silence. Now something else was scheduled for 11/22 - and it didn't come off. It had been carefully arranged by some supposedly on our side who I think are of 100% evil influence, regardless of motive. What a coincidence! But Lemarre was in the US and in New Orleans 17 days later, with the story he had almost died but the complete change of his blood had saved him. I tell you, it was a remarkable recovery - and how very fast!

He did a stupid thing, but probably one he thought he would get away with, having decided we were all fools and self-deceivers, based on his estimate of those he had met and Garrison. He had a showing for the critics, some of whom, like Maggie and Rsy, knew the material. And by that time they had enough of an idea what had happened in New Orleans. So, they tore him up something terrible. I understand at that point he gave up and flew back to Europe. However, if he is in touch with you - which I doubt will now happen - please be friendly, reveal none of this, and learn what you can. He is vain, convinced he is superior to others, makes little effort to hide his lack of regard for others, is well educated (London School, PhD, specialist in oil!) and, I am satisfied, is or was intelligence.

Now there are not too many "former" French - or say kind - of agents kicking around. Generally, it is mutually beneficial for the relationship to continue, if I may be subtle. A whole bunch of them getting together on an unprofitable, offbeat project requiring a very large investment and yielding no income is most improbable, to me at least. Therefore, I conclude they are not former, and their connection is not French.

If some of this is not pleasant, it is sincere and I am convinced it is accurate. Make your own judgement. Do not let it throw you. Probably worse news is not too far in the future. We will survive it. I now have ~~and~~ so much that is so awful and so entirely beyond question the only (and what a big) problem is getting attention for it.

Have a real good year.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

1/7/69

Dear Paul and Gary (and no others),

The attached are the best copies I can make of two letters I received yesterday from Dick Bernabei, one of my correspondents and a young man whose work has been solid and whose approach has been very good. He had done fine things on trajectories, new things of real meaning. He has been sitting on Dawnay, trying to keep him on the ground (which is no easy task with Joesten pulling upward). I send these two you, hoping they will not lead you to hasty and perhaps unfair judgements of the man, because I think you should know the content on "Hepburn". Perhaps some of the information will also have meaning to you, especially if you followed the German student disturbances and recall if anything of special interest came out then about Springer, who seems willing to publish libelous material.

If you have any means of learning more about the Canadian angles and names, that could be helpful. As time goes on, I become more concerned we have not had the end of this operation.

A small thing that fascinates me, with the French minority activities and attitudes in Canada: a law firm with a possibly French name that has a phone number 1066! That was quite a year for the French vs the English, wasn't it? So, I wonder of the other connections of this firm.

Paul, no reason not to share this with Kim and Hal, asking them that it go no further, for these letters should not be held against those who wrote them, especially not Dick.

I think the Thompson content can be of enormous importance. I knew he had once started to copy the film, in the form of stills, and been caught or stopped. If you recall my initial reaction when his stuff first appeared in the SEP, you perhaps understand how this excites me. His attempt was in the LIFE office, when he worked there. Recall also the limited number of sources of Z.

I'd be interested in any thoughts you have. I am gradually accumulating names of those connected with Lamarre, in England and on the continent, and some first-names only in the U.S., where the French edition expresses indebtedness to Pat, Ann, Bernard and Mary-Ann. Two of these names link in my kind and not with any comfort! They are the first names of two people I know, man and wife! Pat and Bernard. Of course, this is without meaning without proof, for these are not uncommon names.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

FROM DICK SPRAGUE  
TO DICK BERNABEI  
RE FAREWELL AMERICA

370 Howard Drive  
Hawthorne, N.Y. 10530

~~The University Club  
One West Fifty-Fourth Street  
New York 19, N.Y.~~

Dear Dick (BERNABEI)

This is a quick note to ask a favor of you. I'll answer all of your other letters and points later. The book Penn Jones referred to is the old book "The Plot" by James Hepburn. I don't know whether you know its history or not, but it is very significant. You read, I'm sure, Garrison's public remarks about French intelligence penetrating the JFK assassination team and sending him information on the plot and plotters.

Last May he showed me what they had sent. It was a draft of "The Plot". Subsequently they contacted him from Geneva and sent him more details and have been providing information ever since. Two investigators have been to Geneva and Paris and checked out the story. The group calling themselves "James Hepburn" are ex-French intelligence people now private citizens, who did penetrate "The Committee", the name they have given to the higher level people who arranged for JFK's assassination.

"The Plot" was finally published in French and German and several other languages. The French version is called "L'Amérique Bécule" and copies are available from Steve Burton in Los Angeles. I bought one but unfortunately I don't read French, so here the enclosed ad OVER

appeared in Ramparts Magazine this month, I jumped for joy and sent a check to Tara for 10 copies in English of "Farewell America".

The damned thing was returned as you see it in the enclosed envelope. I'm trying to check through Ramparts to see what happened. There are several possibilities I suppose. The CIA could have chosen this method of Postal interception to keep the books out of the U.S.

Or the whole address, name and ad could be a fake. Or the French group might have set up shop at that address, and been closed down quickly by CIA through RCMP or Canadian intelligence. There is no telephone listed at the address.

I can tell you this much, the book is not a fake, nor is the group who wrote it. They have most of the facts about the shots and the actions in Dealey Plaza correct. They check out with everything else I know. The only names named in the book as being part of the Committee, that we don't know from other sources, are Will Fritz and Jesse Curry.

The methods the French people used to penetrate the Committee were typically French; women agents.

Would you know anyone in Montreal who can check out the firm and the address, or are you close enough to do it?

Dick (SPRAGUE)



30 December 1968

Dear Harold:

A thousand thanks for your warning about Farewell America. Enclosed is a copy of Sprague's letter to me about the book; it will explain for you the origin of my almost unbridled enthusiasm. Besides this, Penn Jones appended a note to a brief letter that he sent to me about another matter. In the note he said to watch out for the book because it gave the plot from beginning to end. Jones did not discuss the authorship. Joesten had read a serialized version of the book (then called The Plot) in a German tabloid by the name of Bild am Sonntag (I think that this is published by Springer Verlag in Berlin). Several weeks ago Joesten asked me if I had heard of Hepburn, and whether the book was authentic. I could give him no information for I did not connect Jones's Farewell America with The Plot. I then got Sprague's letter and I began to thump with enthusiasm.

In accordance with Sprague's request, I sent \$7 to Tara Editions in Montreal and asked that they send me at least one copy (paid in advance with the \$7) and 10 copies (for Sprague) which I would pay when I received them. At the time I did not know whether XX Tara was legitimate, and did not want to send as much as \$50 to a company that perhaps did not even exist. In my letter I expressed extreme interest in the book and offered my help in getting copies into the States if they had trouble moving them across the border.

It was on the basis of the enthusiasm that I expressed in that letter that Lamarre phoned me on (or about) December 11. He explained that they had overcome their difficulties in getting the books into Canada, and that the copies that I requested would soon be sent to me. Chiefly, however, he was interested in securing my help in setting up a showing of the movie here at the University. Naturally, I said that I would do what I could, and I have indeed made preliminary arrangements. I am awaiting further word from Lamarre before I go farther. Lamarre asked what caused me to volunteer my help, and I explained that I knew about the authorship of the book; that Hepburn was a pseudonym representing a group of individuals. I do not think that I mentioned French intelligence. I said that I had received information about the authorship from a person who was in touch with Garrison.

After I spoke with Lamarre and was thinking about our conversation, I realized that he was calling from New York, and not from Montreal, as I had supposed. A few days later I wrote to Tara Editions (Lamarre had given me the name and phone number of Mr. Sutto) and told them to advise Lamarre that if he was in N.Y. he should contact Dick Sprague or Trent Gough for help.

When my books failed to arrive after a few weeks, I called Sutto and asked about the delay. He said they would be sent within a week or two. The distribution of the book is being handled by Sutto's law firm in Montreal. I gather that the address on Brescotes Street is little more than a mail drop. The phone number of Sutto's law firm is 844-1066; I do not know the name of the firm.

Before I heard from Lamarre, and when I had no reply to my request for books from Tara, I wrote to Dawney and asked him to look out for it in Europe ~~xxx~~ on the chance that I could not secure the books here. I gave him the name of the French version, too, (L'Amerique Brûle). Dawney got hold of the French version and gave me a very brief account of it. He said that the book described the events on Dealey Plaza pretty much as Joesten had outlined them, but that it dealt mainly with advance plotting before the shooting. He said the L'Amerique Brûle failed to give details that were printed in the German serialized account that Joesten told him about. Specifically he said that L'Am. B. did not mention the amount that was paid to Curry and Fritz, whereas the German account did.

I have requested a copy of the French version from Steve Burton (Spr-1)



sort of political rally a few days before Bob Kennedy was shot, and that they show Sirhan with the girl in the polka dot dress. I don't know ~~who~~ whether Willis saw the pictures or merely heard about them.

Here is another issue that is hanging fire-- that is, I don't know whether matters have gone beyond the point that I know about.

Canadian broadcasting Company several weeks ago ran a TV interview with ~~Ex~~ William Bradford Huie when two of Huie's Look articles had already been published. It was not of very great interest, for he gave no data that added to the material in his articles. But in the course of the interview he made a cryptic remark which I correctly interpreted to mean that he was going to talk with Sprague and hear what Sprague had to say about a possible connection between the JFK and MLK killings. Huie did not say much, but I knew what Sprague was up to, and I put two and two together.

I mulled over it for a few days and finally resolved to write Sprague and tell him that I thought Huie was either a fool or a scoundrel, and to be on guard. ~~Sprague's reply indicated that~~ By the time he got my letter, Sprague had already talked with Huie. Sprague's reply to me indicated that he had indeed interested Huie in the possibility that "Frenchy" is the Raoul who <sup>was</sup> lured Ray into the plot. Huie said he would follow up the lead as Sprague suggested, and would show Frenchy photos to Ray. I was delighted to learn that Huie was going to co-operate with the "scavengers", for the possibility of opening up a line directly to Ray was very exciting. Sprague seemed very encouraged, for Huie gave him some information which indicated that he thought Sprague serious enough to trust ( I'll mention that info below). However, Sprague wrote subsequently and indicated that for some unexplained reason Huie had cooled to Sprague's "wooing", and that the line to Ray might now be closed.

It drives me wild that Huie has not yet published his promised third article about Ray, for it is supposed to deal with Ray's activities after the shooting-- material that I am especially interested in, his travels in Canada and Europe. Not that I will necessarily believe what he says, but I would like to know what Ray (or those who control him) would like us to think. I cannot help thinking that Sprague might have touched a raw nerve in his conversation with Huie, and that in his subsequent inquiries Huie learned something that he dared not even imagine. That is purely a guess, and things may have changed since my last letter from Sprague, but that third article about Ray is a hell of a long time in coming.

This is what Huie told Sprague. He said that he has a witness who got a good look at "Willard", the man who is supposed to have done the shooting. This is a witness that the FBI does not know about; a woman, I think. The witness said that Willard was not Ray. That ties in neatly with the failure of known witnesses to identify photos of Ray as the person they knew as Willard.

Ray's story, according to Huie, is that he was outside the hotel at the time of the shooting, waiting in the Mustang. Ray says that Raoul did the shooting, and that he (Ray) had no knowledge that King was going to be shot.

The reason why Sprague is interested in Raoul is because Ray's description of Raoul corresponds closely with Frenchy. Also some other things indicate that Frenchy may have been involved.

Sprague did not mention Dawnay's inquiries in London. Just as well, for if Dawnay is right, it is best not to give "them" time to think up a plausible excuse for the hanky-panky that might have gone on in London. I especially want to see what develops in that regard.

After I sent you the material from CIL-- the tests re trajectory-- I re-read Frazier's testimony and noted parts that may negate the assertions that I made previously. I have not yet had time to check the testimony of those who handled the rifle before Frazier.

Even if the trajectory tests prove worthless because the scope was removed before Frazier got it, there is still grounds for accusing fakery.

The WR distinctly gives the impression that the rifle was sighted high and to the right at the time of the assassination, for it asserts that such an arrangement would be advantageous to a shooter in "Oswald's" window. That assertion is based not only on something that Frazier says in his testimony, but (perhaps even more directly) on a letter from Hoover to Rankin in which Hoover makes that claim. I do not yet have the reference for that letter, for I saw it at a time when this issue did not especially interested me, and merely made a mental note that it existed. The letter clearly indicates that Hoover believed the rifle was sighted in high and to the right at the time of the shooting. Moreover, I am almost certain that the wording of that passage of the WR was taken from Hoover's letter to Rankin.

I had to go to that conference before I could trace any of the relevant material. I'll especially note the testimony of Lt. Day and of FBI agents Latona and Stombough, for one of them may have removed the scope before Frazier got it.

I'll collect the material, and when it's ready I'll send it to you. It may take time though, for I am preparing lectures for a new school term.

I hope that this business with Farewell America does not upset things, though it might, if indeed it is phony. I lapped up Sprague's account of the authorship, and it's clear that Sprague is fully convinced that it is authentic-- he relies very heavily on Garrison. Also Penn Jones.

This thing could easily get out of hand.

Still,

*Dick*

Bernabei