

My Uncle Lambert, H...

To Louis Ivon

12-10-68

From Harold Weisberg

For your information only

Subject: Farewell America

I want to carry forward whatever I might be able to do, therefore I ask that you keep what I here record to yourself. There has already been the major impediment of which you are aware.

A little after 8 a.m. yesterday morning, Steve Jaffe, to whom I had spoken about this in California last month, phoned me and said he was in town with Mr. Herve Lamarre, of "Farewell America". He said they were looking for a 16mm sound projector in order to show Jim the film. I offered to help them said I had a car and was going to the office, etc. He accepted. They were at the Ponchartrain Hotel, Steve in 1104, Lamarre in 1102. Both are large double rooms.

Steve told me he was going around with Lamarre, who was paying all his expenses, and it gave him the means, he said, to do other things. I had a cup of coffee with them while Lamarre finished his packing.

Lamarre is about 5'10", with black hair thinning in the front of the top and a little longer there to cover the baldness (he wears it a little higher there, too), with red cheeks that seem almost to be lightly rouged, lips that give the suggestion of coloring, too. I'd estimate his weight at 155-160 lbs. There is a suggestion of effeminacy. He smokes Gitanos, a strong French cigarette (and gave me the pack when he found I liked them, saying he carried an ample supply). He has a good command of English, though with a heavy accent, particularly in some expressions. He was educated in the London School of Economics, had a fashion magazine in France ("Mademoiselle", with no connection of the American one of that name), not the most usual business for an economics prof. His real specialty and interest is oil. This Steve told me. Also that although there were a number of contributors to the book, it is really his job. He took the name Haptura because he allegedly has a crush on the movie actress and James from the French for "I love", J'aime.

Lamarre told me he had an appointment at 1029 Royal St. I said this presented no problem because I had the time and it was not distant. I also wanted to spend as much time with him as possible because, as you know, I distrust the book and its motive. I parked the car on the laxe side of Royal at the Gov. Nicholls end of the block and he walked down the street. He said he'd be about 10 minutes and was, I would estimate, at least a half hour. During this time I spoke to Jaffe, asking him questions and explaining some things to him. He did not know where Lane is, says he has not heard of him since the week before the election, when Marx was in California campaigning.

We had earlier discussed the possible embarrassment to Jim of his writing about the case. He told me he had adopted a pen name. I told him that was not really enough, now that he had appeared in public with Broshere. I told him I had overheard expressions of concern about such things and suggested he and the others carrying them

Shun from them in.

He understood this and expressed a willingness to do it.

We got into the movie version of the book. He told me it had been delayed reaching the United States because Lamarre had been taken quite ill (Lamarre later said he had required transfusions that amount to an exchange of his blood). Their immediate plans were to go to Canada, where they would show the film (with emphasis now on college audiences), work on some problems with the book (copies ordered in response to the Ramparts and have not been mailed out, as he acknowledged (as Lamarre later did, with amplification), then they were returning to the U.S. They were on an 11:30 plane to New York yesterday, and Jaffe indicated they might return to New Orleans. It later turned out that Lamarre had other ideas.

Jaffe was very proud of the inclusion of the Zapruder film in it, presented three times he said, in various speeds. When he said that I was stunned, because the number of sources of this film is limited and one version is in your possession. When I heard this I decided the thing to do was to delay them to past the point where they could show the movie and still catch the plane. This was not difficult in downtown traffic, with a few wrong turns.

Lamarre carried his black attache case, with combination lock, with him. He kept it always in his possession. It looks like a rather expensive one. When he returned, apologizing for his delay, we continued conversing about both the book and the movie.

The entire operation is surrounded with and submerged in so many fronts, subsidiaries, foreign corporations, they are not concerned about the success of litigation against them. The job is French, the corporation is Luxembourg, the work seems to have been done in Switzerland, the American book is to be done in Canada (where they appear to have been having publishing problems), what has been published had been done in Belgium, etc.

They have a contract with ^{now} Wyle Stuart in the United States, for six-month publication. However, due to what Lamarre describes as language problems, there were a rather large number of errors. Stuart asked for two months for editing. Lamarre now thinks he will convert this into a means of voiding the contract. The deal was made in September.

The language problem, according to Lamarre, seems from the original having been written in English, then translated into French, then back into English. With him having done the major part of the book (according to Jaffe), and his native tongue French, this seems a bit odd, but it is what he said. I think he said they detected 250 mistakes in language, from what he said.

He made no bones about saying the various fronts were to avoid litigation. This is contrary to what Jaffe told me (that they held back in the book to use their knowledge advantageously in litigation), and not quite in the spirit yet not opposed to my recollection of what Jim Garrison had told me, that they'd welcome suits and would protect whoever published it in the United States.

"How can we be sued in the United States", he asked me, in reply to my question, had they supplied their distribution agents with counsel. I explained they'd have no bookstore sales without this guarantee of protection. They seem to have forgotten about bookstore sales. It also appears that Stuart will distribute from Canada. There may be problems with Canadian publication. He seems to think it will not be possible, that the book will have to be printed abroad and imported. I asked if there might not be injunctions against mail shipment. He seemed little concerned. He seemed less concerned than this little by the very poor sales. Of all countries, sales have been greatest in Monaco, where they have reached but 300. But the advertising refers to large German sales, for example. The Canadian office got its door lettered two days before or two after the appearance of the "Ramparts" ad. He attributes failure to ship books in fulfillment of orders to problems arising from this, which does not sound persuasive.

It is immediately apparent that, aside from the already great production costs, including both preparation and translation of the manuscript and printing, this is an extremely costly operation. His and Jaffe's travels alone total a large cost. It is obvious that this must be a sponsored book, with a very well-healed and generous sponsor. The movie has the same needs. It cannot ever be a commercial success. This can be explained by what was told Garrison, that the real sponsor is French intelligence, but I doubt it, even though it superficially seems to be the case.

What I learned about the Zapruder film is little. When I told Lamarre I understood they had to have stolen it, he pretended not to understand. "It didn't come from a cabbagehead any more than babies do", he told him, and he smiled. In Alcock's office he changed the story to say they had copies from two different sources, one being much better than the other. He parried my question, what generation, and then shifted into their treatment when I asked about other things. He was evasive, in the guise of not having understood, when I asked them if their film had all the frames. When I explained, he said they had all the crucial frames, meaning from the moment the car emerged from behind the sign. I told him I disagreed with their analysis and reporting of the location at the time of the first shot. He shrugged but did not answer. At this time there was the interruption with which you are familiar and I could carry it no further.

(Returning to the book, when I examined the copy he gave me, which has a broken spine that can be attributed to handling in travel), I discovered that in about a half-dozen places they have torn pages out. One more note about his appearance, his right ankle turns in.)

There are only a limited number of places they could have obtained the Z. film. LIFE has the original and any copies they may have made, the Secret Service has two and was so stingy with them they did not even give the National Archives one copy that is the official exhibit. The FBI has a copy it made from a Secret

service copy. This is supposed to be the Archives copy. In the Archives, it is kept under lock and key. Before the days of the Archives, when the CIA asked the FBI for a copy, it declined, referring the request to the Commission, which arranged with LIFE for the CIA to deal with them. If the CIA did get this copy, which seems like a reasonable presumption, this accounts for all the copies of which I know. Zapruder is said not to have one.

It is possible to distinguish between copies made from the original now and copies made immediately in Dallas. The original was "damaged" at LIFE and is missing frames 207-12 (what is called 212 is part of it and part of 207). If the French copy has these frames, it comes from a copy made immediately in Dallas. If it does not, it comes from LIFE, after the damage. It could also have been made at LIFE before the damage, depending upon when that was. While it is within possibility that a copy was obtained by from LIFE, it is not likely that this was with LIFE's assent. They have an enormous amount of money tied up in this.

When I was with Lamarre, he asked Jaffe to get on the phone and arrange for showings the end of this week in California. I suggested there was not enough time for advertising by then. He first decided to aim from about 12-20, then said they could do this about the end of next week. He would like to open in Berkeley, I suggested other problems there might want him to open in LA or San Diego. He said he plans to include Washington, indicating he thinks American University is possible or that there has already been expression of (student?) interest.

When I could today I took a closer look at 1029 Royal St. It is a recently-redone business property, finished in red. In the directory, the address is listed "Van E. Groves (Stge)". There is an attractive small sign in the window that reads Villere's Coal Scuttle. There is a jangling scuttle so lettered hanging in front. The sign in the door window announces hours are from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m.

I checked with Barbara Reid about this and found she had knowledge. The place opened recently, she said, within the past couple of months. It sells packaged coal and wood. The operator is a wealthy, young (45-6) beautiful widow who owns considerable property. Her husband was killed in an auto or motorcycle accident. He was the son of a well-known old local family in coal. It is also wealthy. It is Barbara's presumption this woman's money comes from her husband.

She is also Joel Palmer's landlord.

Barbara arranged for Joel to have a modest apartment. He soon obtained this half of a house ^{837 N. H. Street} he now has, it costs him \$180 monthly. She has a maid in her half, as I discovered last week. Joel gets along "swimmingly" with her, Barbara says. Almost as soon as her husband died, a bearded motorcyclist moved in with her. Joel found this place for himself, now Barbara does not know. She has a little girl 4-5 years old.

Her family is tied in with Bernstein of Preservation Hall and related to

her family is tied in with Sorenstein, of Preservation Hall, and related Allen and Samara Jaffe.

The property at 725 Ursulines, Barbara says the directory shows, is listed to Flora Villere, 522-3994. Baranzza says she owns this, too.

It would seem that if one wanted to seem to be occupied, or to have a business that requires little time, the packaged coal and wood business is ideal. There cannot be a heavy sale in this more expensive packaging. If the business can close at 3 p.m., there seems to be little concern for volume or profit. In short, this could be an excellent cover.

Although it could have been social, it did strike me as odd that this Frenchman had an appointment at such an exotic business as soon as he arrived in a seemingly strange town. He did take his attache case with him, though his trusted Jaffe was in the car and could have watched it.

Barbara says the beardnik hangs out in the Seven Seas.

Steve and Lamarre also talked about having looked for girls at the Red Barn, of which I'd never heard. They seem not to have been pleased. This was Sunday night, from the way they spoke. Saturday Louis Ivon said he had heard from Lamarre, but I do not know whether he was then in New Orleans.

It does seem odd that of all the people who own houses from whom he could have rented, Joel found the owner with this interesting visitor and unique and uncommercial and unnecessary - business. Particularly is this true when one considers Joel's recent career. Is it likewise rather exceptional that of all the people in New Orleans Lamarre might want to visit, he did visit a person so related to Palmer and in a business ideal as a cover.

I did not tell Barbara exactly why I was interested in this address.

This entire affair is even more strange in the light of the Jack Martin phone call last night. He carried on a tirade with Barbara to get my phone from her. He called in the morning when Lamarre and Jaffe were in the office. I cut him off then. He began the conversation with the statement he was going to tape it, rather exceptional for Jack, who customarily tapes without permission. I told him I would also and gave Louis the tape. He also called Tommy Saunier, who taped him, and I have that. Among the things Jack reported is a story that Louis Ivon had had a fight or had beaten up a representative of the French Surete, that day, at the airport, for having allegedly given Garrison bad information that cost Garrison \$7-8,000. During his call to me, Jack was relatively brief, also unusual for him.

Tommy says there is a threat against Garrison on his tape.

LYLE STUART is an enterprising, more or less progressive, entirely unscrupulous, small publisher who has achieved considerable merchandising success by extensive use of sales by mail and newspaper advertising. He is strongly pro-Castro. He is more or less an underground publisher, and specializes in sex books of various kinds. He is, however, a very shrewd and stingy man with whom I have had my own experiences, and I cannot imagine him actually going through with the handling of a book so full of serious legal problems, only part of which is the actual cost of litigation. He is an ideal man to have been selected for this function.

On the film, it is STEVE JAFFE's story that it was obtained from one of BOBBY KENNEDY's People. He told it to Jim Alcock. This seems unlikely to me. It is also inconsistent with what LAMAR told me. He said they had two sources.

For your information, there seems to have been a black and white copy of the Zapruder film made in Chicago en route to New York. However, consider/^{ing}that we have seen the "Farewell America" copy, which is in color, that source is automatically eliminated.