

4/9/71

Dear Jim,

When I am away, mail sometimes accumulates to where it becomes a problem. I do have to go into the post office in the morning, it is 9 p.m. our time, and I'm assuming you are not going to phone. I remained home either all or almost all of Thursday in the event you phoned then. I was gone for no more than an hour yesterday. His takes care of the periods of time you said you might call. If you are broke, I realize any call can be a burden to you. I can rarely afford long distance calls, much as I should make them.

To the degree a man of strongly-held feelings can, I try to withhold moral judgments on people. I may, with passion, evaluate what they may or may not have done, but except with fascists whose fascism is relevant, I generally eschew this line. When you tell me Moore hated Kennedy, I ask you if that is worse than the really deep hatred LBJ and Hoover bore him. There is a difference in Moore's favor. If it is not exculpatory, for example, he could quit and sound off were he principled and brave enough, it does, very much, mitigate. And I'm not about to equate what he did and what Hoover did. I know things that Moore did that you do not, and that he has no way of knowing I know. I don't think he'd be proud. But he is the one who takes orders, not gives them. He did what he was told to do. Even if he desired doing what he did, the major fault lies with those who ordained the official fiction. This does not make Moore innocent. But it leads me to the feeling that he has a different and lesser kind of guilt.

Your letter of 4/29, as you know, is in some ways inconsistent with what you had written and said, and it could be interpreted as casting C in a different role. I have no objections to his feeling me out or feeling out what I know. The former I represented as it is. The latter, what I said, I said truthfully. However, by no means completely. The same as I said of Moore goes for Hosty. Perhaps C didn't know it, but Hosty reputedly was the bridge-playing companion of one of the more virulent racists in Dallas, a disreputable man who, if memory is accurate, had a long criminal record and was a business associate of General Walker. Now, this is anything but the kind of man I'd chose for a friend. But so are some of the eminences. I can think of nothing Hosty did (besides fail) that he was not told to do. I am certain he perjured himself before the Warren Commission, and I doubt he'd have done that without instructions. So, wherein, despite his nasty beliefs, is Hosty worse than others, for example, aside from his immediate superiors, some of the liberal lawyers on the Commission, whose transgressions against decency, society and the traditions and obligations of their calling are great. Are they good people and Hosty bad? As one accumulates years, Jim, one tends to see more gray through older eyes.

If you've read my work, you know what I say of some of the agents and some of the things they did and said. But I do not play God.

What you and C do is a decision each of you has to make. I do believe that if he is for real he can be in jeopardy, can be damaged in other ways, and much as I might want any useful knowledge he might have, not at that cost. What Sprague has done cannot be undone. But if, as you say, while terrified at the mention of the CIA C then told you to approach Sprague, I am baffled. It makes only limited sense, and that I prefer not to believe, not of the man you describes C as being. He did not need my caution about Sprague if he had read anything from him or the CIA, not a man with his background, training and experience.

Whether or not Sprague responded to your letter, it made no difference. He wrote what he did almost the minute he got back from out there. I saw him after I got your letter, drew him aside, explained how he had been irresponsible, etc., how ignorant he is of the basic fact, how much damage he had done and could do, and he thanked me and promised to

be silent and circumspect. That lasted overnight. All those nuts are eaten by ego. His was back in the saddle in the morning, and the last I heard he was planning something against me to the entire CIA membership. That bothers me little, for there are none among them save a few who are my friends of whose opinion I am at all concerned, and he'll run himself with them. In any event, I do what I think right, regardless, as you should be able to see for yourself, and I try not to be selfish in these decisions. To the degree a man can, at least to the degree I can, I do what is right as I see it, and if it denies me what I want, I am not troubled by it.

That you have wasted the energy of an aging man who suddenly feels the years with his work undone is the least of what you have done. But I need not repeat that. I do hope you learn by it. You are still young.

I do look forward to hearing from C. I hope he sees this is the right way for him, the way that in the future, if any decision is now painful, is the one that will trouble him least. If Hosty bragged, then C knows more and in different areas than he has indicated, and of different cities than Dallas. Of the King assassination, I do not know how sharp he is. If he is real sharp, he may read some of my ellipses. I hope he does and I hope he reacts. But there is nothing I can do about that save give him the advice of a man who has lived longer, had more experience with life, and is better able to predict what may in later years haunt a younger man. Especially one of a minority who cannot be blind to what is today happening to all minorities, especially the one from which he comes, and ought be intelligent enough to ask himself whether this can flow from the assassinations. Should he later come to realize this is the case and that he has done less than he might, if he has a conscience, it will nag him.

If I had a choice, I would not exercise it. I have to leave it the way the two of you do. I think I'd have little trouble learning C's real identity, but I'll not even try. I know agents, past and present, and I'll not mention this to them. I can consult the list of members of the association of former agents, and again I will not. It will be C's way, and I hope we both agree that is the right way, now and for later.

I wish you both well.

Sincerely,