

2/14/69

Dear Steve,

I've just returned from the hearing in Washington, too tired to respond to your letter at length and with too much to do to warrant the time that would take.

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You ~~may~~ have felt impelled to defend yourself to me, but it was not necessary. To the degree I think you can be defended, I have sought to do it, if that makes any difference. Some of what you told me is false (for example, Howard). This is not persuasive to me and it is unhealthy for you.

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I will not again ask any of you for any information on the "Harewell America" bit. I have most of what I need. This may not be enough. I want it only for our defense. It is Jim who told you not to do this, need I tell you what kind of judgement he displayed? Had he not had emergency help, the prospects are the whole thing would have blown up and he'd have been disbarred. But I am sick and tired of trying to help stupidities escape their own error. There is entirely too much I can do that can serve a constructive purpose. Burton raised the question of office loyalty. Ivon told him to give me the data. What I wanted is not who you ~~slept~~ slept with, where you ate, but the names and functions and descriptions of those you dealt with - what might enable a defense of that mess all of your disper-minded fools blundered into. That we have not all been ruined by it is not ~~due~~ due to any of you. Jim's survival of it is in spite of himself. He has more lemmings than all of Scandinavia!

However, I do promise you this: aside from the great harm already done, if there is more trouble with this, do not expect me to remain silent. Not one of you has the good judgement to get out of the rain. You have brought this and other bad things to pass (you plural). Everybody else is paying for it. It has cost me, personally, very heavily. So, I do not care what your reason for your silence. It is you who did this and you who remain silent. You are old enough to make your own decisions.

You may enjoy attempting an analysis of the panel report, but I have already completed a 75,000-word book on it. I doubt if you'll understand enough (which is not and is not intended as an insult) or that your father will, kind as it is of him to offer to help. I am not saying that what I have done cannot be added to or that it is perfect or ~~even~~ even close. However, it does have what no body else saw or understood, including the legal and the medical experts, and it has the merit of being completed. Within two or three days it will be retyped and ready for publication. Not that I expect it, for I haven't the money and when there is money available, it is available only for foolishness and pleasures. Nonetheless, if you decide to go ahead, you will need the panel and doctors' reports, the DJ brief, the Rhoads affidavit and the GSA-Kennedy-estate contract, plus (I think) the Boswell and Marshall letters. You should also have knowledge I doubt you have, of the detailed fact. Having the autopsy report is only part. Frankly, I think it is wasting time except for the experience. It might be good training, a valuable exercise in analysis. There is enough on the UPI wire of what went into evidence today, which is from my work, to give you a good start. There is also much good in Bud's brief, some of which came from me. I caution you against Forman's material, the only viable part of which is the impossibility of going through the neck without hitting bone and at anything like the required angle and that, despite his contrary claim, is not his anyway. It is two years old in essentially the form in which he uses it and all of us who have spoken of this have pretty well exhausted what he says. The significant difference is that he used skeletons. However, it is in this narrow use only that his stuff, original or not, stacks up at all. Please excuse the errors and try and wade through them. I've no time for more now.

PS No pp'l del'y in country.

Sincerely,

My new address:
1412 S. Brockton #1
Los Angeles, Calif. 90025
New Phone: 473-6040

Dear Harold,

February 4, 1969

First of all, let me say to you how very much I am grateful for the truly sincere and honest way in which you addressed me. ~~Not only do~~ I respect your concern for me as a person, something which could only stem from friendship and a kind general concern for younger people. Your letter, which I realize I received quite long ago, was something which was kind of painful, especially on the heels of an emotional shock like the one in N. O. Nevertheless, the attempt that you made to give me the "straight stuff" as you saw it can only be something which I regard with gratitude.

There were some things you said which I want to defend a bit. Although basically you were correct in saying that my judgment, and in many instances my performance, was not what it should have been. I know that, I admit that and I have, with the help of your letter and some other things, faced that fact.

I wish to say here and now, however, that if what Vince accused me of is something he ever in his wildest thoughts thinks he can prove, namely that I am an agent (of anybody that you would consider an enemy of your work and that of the investigation) working for anyone (except Jim), I welcome his attempt and will do everything I can to show how false his accusation was, and still is. There are people in this thing that have been disappointed by my work and some of my actions but there are just as many instances where my loyalty and purpose have been solidly and permanently established. Although the organization of the investigation was never actually a military type of chain-of-command, I can say that Jim, who is at the top of the command is not the least bit doubtful of my loyalty. And from your letter I understand that you are not either. Therefore, I dismiss Vince's charges as either a device to see if I might have been what he was insinuating, an error in his judgment, or a product of his own paranoia.

I would like to ask you to forgive the long delay in my answering your letter. I assure you it was not out of laziness, disrespect, or lack of concern. I was, when I received your letter, still very shaken by the N.O. incident and by the visit of Lamarre. I was in the middle of a heavy workload which had gone neglected due to the total amount of time which I had devoted to Lamarre's visit and to the article which I wrote for the Free Press (not published there but published in the Midlotkian Mirror.) In addition, I was attempting to correct the rumors which had swiftly passed around to people related, in one way or another, to the case. To top it off I was in the process of finding another apartment in which to live and also trying to meet the expenses involved in moving by doing some photography on the side. It was a busy holiday. Presently, I have moved (note new address above) and am settled into a rather rigorous period of work and study at the studio where I am working (Universal) and trying to learn how to write scripts. I also am studying for an exam given by the Director's Guild which is for the entrance to another training program.

If you will permit me to, I would like to reply to a few of the comments you made in your letter which I felt were not entirely true. Again, I agree with the underlying criticism you have made of me and I feel it was constructive and something which, as you say I will have to live with, ^{but that} I will have learned by.

THAT I have been a disaster to the investigation I cannot really say that I agree with ~~some~~ but I must allow you your judgment. I think that while I have made mistakes, and I know I am not alone but that is no excuse, I think I have attempted in good faith to support and contribute to it. I think that some of the photographic work which I did, some of the work I have done (which has not necessarily resulted in evidence for a courtroom) such as helping any and all investigators or critics who have come into town and needed assistance was in some way a contribution. I think that nothing I have done can in any way begin to compare with the incredible dedication, sacrifice and hence, immeasurable contribution you have made to this fight for the truth but I think that I did not sit back on my ass and let everyone else do something about a travesty which effects the lives of us all so importantly. Where the majority of the people in this country have contemptuously neglected the most important fight for life of our time, I have not sat idly by.

It is true that you have brought witnesses from all over to New Orleans. Witnesses of real importance to the case. You have also persuaded witnesses, like Loren Hall, who in the final analysis, were not so important, to come around. While I haven't brought one really important witness I did play what I feel was a contributing part in the simple process of persuading a witness, who had been subpoenaed and refused to go, to change his mind. This was Lawrence Howard Jr. And in the same kind of effort, sincere even though not contributory, I very carefully attempted to bring a witness who appeared to be important, to the point where he would go to New Orleans. This was someone who had been considered important, by the office, before his interrogation there. I further asked Mark Lane, who is regarded well by the office even though you dislike him for your own reasons, to verify the potential before I attempted to have the office bring him down. This was Broshears. Again, he turned out to be valueless but he had been considered important.

It strikes me that there are numerous leads in any investigation which must, absolutely must, be checked out even though they turn out to be valueless. I do not think that the investigator who follows out an ultimately unimportant lead is any less responsible an investigator. I think you would agree. I do think that in more than one instance I did not exercise adequate good judgment to prevent to expenditure of office funds where this might have been averted. I know that the rationale that I used was probably wrong -- that is that I was unqualified to judge whether or not a potential witness was important or not, and therefore after consulting someone else who was regarded as a better judge than I, finally, I would proceed to seek further action.

Ofcourse, in some cases, as I look back, I consulted people who are now under suspicion for making errors in judgment for other reasons, which might not be classified as errors at all. But

there was no way in the world for me to ^{have} know that then. I didn't really know it until today. That is better unexplained but I think you understand perfectly.

I would like to interject here something before I forget. (I am sort of following your letter to see the things I wanted to mention.) If there is a real need still, for that picture of Rose, I will get it. Please advise me about this.

When you mentioned that my motives were sincere in the work I did, (that is, honestly in search of truth) you also mentioned that I had aspiration for personal gain, or to borrow a phrase from a real boob, "personal aggrandizement!" I cannot for a minute deny that all the time I was associated with the investigation or with people who have so courageously dedicated themselves, such as yourself, Jim, Mort, Mark and the men in the office, I was truly proud. So proud that in cases I might have spoken when I should not have. This is not to say that what I was accused of doing in New Orleans, namely showing my I.D. to a bunny or anyone like that, was in any remote way true. I am guilty not only of being proud, or overly proud, but also of having thought of writing about the case to help and to inform ~~as a contribution~~. I received a great deal of self satisfaction from it and was also proud to see my name above a story about the case. Part of this was immature, definitely. I am certain that I have learned to be more cautious now, to the point where I would not write articles if I were carrying credentials. However, Steve Burton did this repeatedly with permission from the office and he, on occasion erred in his judgment about what to write. To be sure, he is much younger than I. But nearly always, when I was going to write an article I asked permission of either Louis Ivon or Jim and I always got it. One time, when I wanted to write the summary article about the Bradley case just after his extradition was refused by Governor Reagan, Mr. Ivon not only gave me permission to write it but said that I should use my own name because as he said it, "we want you to get credit for the work you do." At that time I said I would gladly use a ~~pseudonym~~ but that I felt someone should write about the unjustified roadblock that our Governor was deliberately throwing in the face of the same processes of law and order that he promised to uphold.

On the subject of credentials you were right. You had already discussed my turning them in because of the fact that I was writing and my association with the inquiry regarding Lamarre. We had not only discussed it but I had agreed to do so, to you. So that dramatic story which Salandria wrote to David Lifton about how the detectives had to use force to take my credentials was not true. The details of that we could go into but the entire incident was such a shock to me that the crucial point of the story was probably not even clear to you. When Lyn and Steve asked me for my credentials I immediately took them out of my pocket. In the meantime the cab-driver who didn't really know what was happening, began to move forward. Then, upset by the apparent neglect for what they were doing, Lyn said "Hold it, Police," and the driver held having advance about two feet. I was by that time holding the I.D. out the window without any resistance, just a little amazement thinking that Salandria, a man with no position in the office as far as I knew, had just fired me.

If I have cost the investigation a lot of money uselessly, and I know I have, I truly regret it. There is no way to get it back, otherwise I would. I know how much you have sacrificed in this regard, although I had understood that your fast in N.O. was part of a diet. I would do anything to be able to earn enough money not only to live but to contribute. But on \$76.33 a week I am just barely making it. Believe me, although my father has been kind enough to buy me clothes and to see that I have a car to drive, I have no other income. Someday, if I sell a script or two, I hope to pay back some of the money I spent. If I can help you in securing some blank tape for your tape recordings I will certainly do that -- not to be patronizing or asking your forgiveness -- but just to help out.

Regarding the sewer photos I took. I am guilty of not taking the one you asked me to get. Partly because I neglected it but also partly because I was doing the specific assignment Jim gave me first. I had to leave D.P. rather abruptly because the police intruded and attempted to confiscate my camera and the film. But I want to be very clear about this. I took the photos that Jim had specifically asked me to take. I attempted not, as you might say to give him an unobjective proof of his theory, but to be absolutely thorough in getting every angle he would want to examine. I did this to the best of my ability. I then developed some of the photos (upon returning to L.A.) and with a partial report I sent him some, not all, of the photos I had taken, stating very clearly that there were more to come. I said that in the short time I had had in the lab I could not develop all and that some did not come out because of a camera malfunction. Those I felt would be important to the analysis and should be taken again by whoever could. I was sending him what I had done so far, something that he had asked for and indicated was of great importance. It was his decision to make whatever public statements that he did. While in a way I should have probably waited until I had developed and studied everything, I had not anticipated any public disclosure until I had the time to send him everything. But, however wrong I may be in saying this, he was and is the boss and if he decides to say something that has to be his decision and I can only stand behind it. In addition, I don't share your opinion of Jim's actions and public statements. That is, I do not agree that his actions have not had a strategically important, successful and justified. Maybe you didn't say, in so many words, that Jim's judgment was wrong or poorly advised but I know you have implied that to me on several occasions. The end result, thus far, has been that he has not only survived the barrage of efforts to obstruct and discredit him but that he has his day in court. In this sense I think that while I might have made use of office funds more wisely and more economically, the basic expenditures approved were part of an investigation. That investigation sought information in many ways, from many sources and not all could ever have been expected to be evidentiary. I mention this because when I went to Europe I was on an assignment and whatever you believe I did, I know and can prove that I did that assignment to the best of my ability. I can assure you that you are wrong when you say that I "so happily pissed away" money "enjoying the good life in Europe." That statement is entirely false and I think a result of your anger at me rather than your first hand knowledge.

The length of time I was there was entirely dictated by the

unforseeable obstacle of the May Strike (Fr. "Le Greve") which closed down every office and means of transportation, and nearly every means of communication available. There were promises that I was led to believe were to be of value which were later broken. That took time. But if you think that by hitchhiking between Geneva and Paris I was "enjoying the good life" you are wrong. The overall value of the trip was to be weighed and judged later. And what I brought back was the proof of where I had been and with whom I had talked. What I found out was certainly not what I had been led to believe would be acquired. I certainly think that a more experienced person might have recognized that more rapidly.

To speak about the entire subject in a letter is something which I cannot do. I have been told not to. I hope you will understand this point. I already attempted to go into some detail about the subject with Ray, Maggie and Fred at a tape recorded interview I had with them. Now I regret that I did not get a copy of the tape because no matter how trustworthy people are you can never be sure information in writing or on tape will not fall into the hands of an irresponsible party or those of one who intends to do damage. It is certainly not up to me whether or not you can have a copy of that tape. Ray Marcus has the tape and can do with it what he chooses because I have no agreement with him. He simply said that he did not plan to use it publicly in any way. I have asked him for a copy but have not yet had a reply. I promise you this -- if Jim wishes for me to put all my recollections down on paper or tape record an interview with you about the whole situation I will do it without hesitation. At the moment I have only the fact that someone who works for him and has been in close touch with him has advised me not to write down all the information I can about this subject. The office has a report and other documents which I turned in. You can ask Jim to let you see this if you haven't already. Maybe I am making an incorrect judgment to say that the entire account of what I can recall about the subject should not be put down on paper. What is important about the trip is already on paper but I know that some very important things which have been in the office and were supposed to have been totally secret have fallen into the hands of people who were out to damage the investigation. So if you will allow me this I would like our discussion of the subject to be face to face.

In conclusion I would like to say that if I ever am able to help you or the investigation I am ready. I plan to complete some research I am doing and send that to the office. I plan also to do some research on the Attorney General's report by the four experts who examined the autopsy photos and x-rays. Or so they say. Already, numerous inconsistencies have been discovered and my father has agreed to go over the report with me comparing it to the original Autopsy report of the Warren Commission and to the reports by the doctors at Parkland. If I could be of assistance to you with this material I would gladly do so.

Surely, you will want to answer this letter. Probably with more citations of where I have been rationalizing instead of telling it like it is. I have tried to be thorough and honest with the same sense of responsibility that motivated your letter but I will be more than happy to correspond with you further. Thank you for taking the time to write me.

Sincerely,  Steve Jaffe