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473-8186

Route 8
Frederick, Md. 21701

April 27, 1968

Mr. Steve Jaffe
18062 Bluesail Drive
Pacific Palisades, California
90272

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Steve:

As I promised you, I have read the memoranda you sent and herewith reply.

Your March 20 interview with Miss Helbling may be quite important. There are several things I would like to say and ask. First, with her and with anyone else interviewed under the same circumstances, you should be alert to both feedback and confabulation. What you do not say in your memo that could influence the thinking of people in New Orleans reading it is that Miss Helbling had been listening to me tell the story of New Orleans possibly for as much as a week on very intensive radio and tv exposure in Los Angeles. While I am not saying it is so, when she mentions a name like Arcacha without apparent good reason, it could have been feedback. Her purpose in phoning me was a laudable one and quite frankly I find the information she gave you potentially extremely exciting; but in questioning such people, I suggest you try, at least in your own mind, to separate that of which they have personal knowledge (and in her case it may be 100%) from that which is of different origin. For your information, her reference to an industrialist from New Orleans named Davis could very well be a person well known to Jim, indications of whose possible involvement I picked up six months ago and who people in New Orleans not on the staff but keeping an eye on this now tell me no longer has a telephone, that Davis helped Walker with his Oxford march, is a Nazi with both capital and lower case "N's" and is quite wealthy as an industrialist. I will send Louis a copy of this letter calling to his attention the possible connection.

But the real purpose of this letter is to ask you for those things that were to have been forthcoming from her in February that, two months later, I do not have. It is urgent that you get this immediately and forward it to me for hand-delivery to the office. I will be there in two weeks and I must digest it in advance. Once I get there, I will be going at a pace that will preclude digesting the information. Pictures in particular are extremely important, even newspaper pictures. I have private medical sources I can tap in the New Orleans area in addition to those available to the office.

Your memo says you showed her a wide variety of pictures. One thing I would want to know is whether you showed her good likenesses of the people in the story of the False Oswald, particularly Hall and Howard. Her reference to drugs exactly coincides with Hall's admission that he collected drugs from doctors, including Cuban doctors, in the Los Angeles area. Please take my use of the word "urgent" literally and do this immediately, sending me what you have by registered mail. There is no special delivery in the country.

May I also suggest that when it takes a whole month to write a memo as important as this one you largely frustrate the purpose of writing memos. If necessary, let something else go. Had I known the contents of this memo two months ago, when it was possible - and had been clamoring for it, as you know - I might have been able to put it to good use and left other people outside the office working on it.

Your memo about Fred Newcomb is an accurate reflection of what Fred says. I know this is so because, as you know, I have been working with him and I really started him. However, what it does lack is critical analysis. Fred is brilliant besides being a wonderful guy and, like each of his, when he makes up his mind something is right he is persuaded. Two things most obviously lacking in this memo, as in Fred's analysis, are an assessment as to whether or not what he alleges was within the realm of physical possibility - and here my belief is that it was not and only those with the extensive knowledge of this film and its history that I have can feel this assurance - and an appraisal of its thoroughness and accuracy. On the second point what you as a photographer should understand better than I is the total absence of any identification of the lenses involved. For your information, let me give you this description of the Zapruder lens: It is an f.18 Bell and Howell "Varamat Zoom", it is model 444P the exact focal length of which is not given in the literature accompanying it but I think it is fair to say that ~~ix~~ it ranges from approximately 10 to 30 mm. I think it is also obvious to you that this is in no way comparable to the other lenses used in taking the pictures you and Fred cite in comparison.

Jim sometimes has to make spot decisions and if he makes them based on incomplete information, the consequences can be both serious and adverse. In this particular case, in failing to tell him that I had been working with Fred on this, you denied him the opportunity for an immediate additional opinion. Here I want to suggest that, busy as the people in Jim's office are, it is unwise to depend upon them to forward copies and that you do what I try to do and that is forward the appropriate copies yourself. In addition, this is the only real way all of us can work together. You will find that I regularly forward what I think is of interest to your people in Los Angeles to Steve and do likewise with the people in San Francisco.

With respect to your memo on Hall, I hope you will take this as I intend it, as a constructive suggestion to permit a younger man the profit of the experience of an older one. Your memo of your March 12 interview with him is (a) repetitious and (b) incomplete. It has the additional defect of not telling him of other information of which you knew was or would be available to him. Remember, he is really very busy and quite tired and, to the degree possible, these things should be done for him.

The first part of the memo repeats only a tiny fraction of what I had gotten from him. There is nothing new in it, including his willingness to go to New Orleans, because I had arranged that a month earlier. The problem here I think is that your tremendous desire to do things is slicing you too thin. As a means of operation, if I may suggest it, you should have done one of two things: You should have turned this over to Al Schwartz entirely or had him with you. Because Al had more time than any of the others of you, when I turned Hall on, I left Al behind as contact with him. If you didn't know this, Steve Burton did. By way of preparation, I had Al with me on each of my three extremely lengthy interviews with Hall and he knew everything I had learned. Hall possesses other information that could have been

extracted from him at the same time and with no more effort. In addition, there are things of potential importance ~~that~~ as signals that were lost upon you simply because it was new to you. There is no warrant for a description of his wife's reaction to the letter Corky Huston had taken her. This, however, is an identification of the fulcrum used by the other side. A second one is his stepson, John Pappas. It likewise may be significant that Hall ~~is~~ alleges he had not seen document 1553 earlier. The only reason he hadn't is because he didn't want to. I told him that anytime he wanted copies, they were available to him in Los Angeles, that he need only ask Al and I had already given them to Art Kevin. I gave him copies of my books and told him to ask for any documents he wanted. I had copies of 1553 with me each of the times I interviewed him and my reason for handling him this way was ~~psychological~~. However, I suggest to you that there may be some reason for Hall to have failed to ask for these documents.

Finally, your memo on Jim Rose: Steve can give you much information on Robert K. Brown and again I suggest knowledge of it prior to interviewing Rose could have made your memo more valuable. Brown is or was a Special Forces captain assigned to the post at which Cubans were trained. He is today engaged in a business the unprofitability of which is absolutely guaranteed: Publishing on guerrilla warfare from Boulder, Colo. He is a man sufficiently trusted by Drennan for Drennan to have made him an offer to kill President Kennedy and he has made what he regards as the right connections in New Orleans - a veteran of the Bay of Pigs - preparatory to writing a book. I encourage you to learn immediately as much as you can about Brown and to extract from Rose everything he knows about him, and please keep me immediately posted.

The foregoing is in no way intended as personal criticism. My purpose is manifold. I want to help you to make better use of your time. I want ~~you~~ to impress upon you the urgent need of collaboration and I want to try to teach you better operating methods. Above all, when we are each individuals, not part of a formal organization, it is of the utmost importance that we establish our own means of working together as much as humans can unselfishly, if for no other reason as a minimum requirement of success. While it is risky to use personal examples, let me tell you that, in November, I prepared Art Kevin and, through him, Steve to do what I ultimately had to do with Hall and Howard. I knew that it would have been more dramatic if I had then done it myself, but I gave Art all of a very considerable investment I had made of both time and money and the possibility of credit on the chance that we could then accomplish our purpose.

One other thing: there is a considerable amount of additional information on Duncan, whose name sometimes appears as Dunkin, and again I encourage you to get it from Steve who may have it.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

Harold Weisberg
Route 7
Frederick, Maryland

Dear Harold,

April 21, 1968

I apologize for the appearance of total irresponsibility, however I hope you will allow the time to read my explanation.

I am furious to hear of the story which you encountered because it makes me sick and disappointed to think that people on our staff have not the integrity to keep from distorted gossip.

Anyone who can prove, in part or whole, that I ever showed my credentials to anyone in the Playboy Club, New Orleans (or anywhere else for that matter) for any reason will have the pleasure of my resignation! I know how this story was started and have no intention of discrediting the fine work which has been done by this person whom I had thought of as my friend but cannot now really consider as anything but a business associate, who for reasons I am not sure, has chosen to tell of personal incidents which he has distorted to place himself in the favor of the office.

During my second or third trip to N.O. I went to the Playboy club twice. Once, alone for a drink and the next night for dinner with Gary Sanders. The first night, several hours after leaving the Playboy Club, I returned to that corner (near

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Bombay St. where I observed a policeman arguing with a drunk. The drunk persisted in harassing the very old and heavy set policeman (who, I assume, is usually stationed on that corner as part of his "beat.") To the point of total anger the policeman cautioned the drunk to go home and stop bothering him. Finally, the policeman raised his fist, in a threatening gesture, and the drunk grabbed him as if to wrestle. Seeing this, I moved closer with some other observers who'd gathered and, in a ~~xxx~~ manner not uncontrolled, attempted to help the old policeman to restrain the drunk. It could be argued that I should have minded my own business but I'm not that kind of person or of not fearing involvement I am guilty. Just about the time this time to other young policeman arrived in a squad car and began to roughly push the observers aside. Coming to me, and understandably not knowing whether I was an aggressor in league with the drunk or just a concerned bystander, the two policeman grabbed me bodily, pulling me away from the hustle and threw me up against the wall. I was a bit outraged to see how people are handled but this is a mild taste, as you of course know. The older of the two officers asked me what I was doing and the other, simultaneously, told me to "move on out of here, fella." I began to answer the first question which irritated the second officer and he asked for my identification. Having had my "credentials

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only a few days and being very proud to have such an honor, and admittedly being glad that I had this type of identification rather than a simple driver's license, I produced my ~~ident~~ "credentials" to the officer. I was genuinely glad to be able to show the officers that they had pushed against the wall a member of the law enforcement "team", however insignificant. ~~This is the story~~

This is the story of how I produced my D.A. Staff credentials to a "playboy Bunny". I wish that I had a picture of those policemen to send along with this letter captioned "playboy Bunnies".

If I were, indeed, guilty of doing what this abominable rumor suggests I should be fired, fired and even charged with false representation of a D.A. official. And I am truly angered that, believing this absolute lie, whoever on the staff told you this did not suggest that I be FIRED. I would.

As for the memo I had promised to send you — I did. You told me I could send it to the office in New Orleans. I sent one there marked ATTENTION HAROLD WASSBERG as you can see (see enclosure) and assumed you would be giving a copy, or if you had left the office, I assumed someone would send you one. I assumed too much.

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An addition (confession) to the "playboy
Bunny" story is that ~~to~~ the next night at dinner
at the club with Gary Sanders, in order to aid
our romantic interest in a particular bunny, who
was (as Gary and I agreed - to be GARY'S date
because I was leaning town) I told her that I knew
Wesley Hefner and would do what I could to see if it
were possible for her to be transferred to the England
Club. She'd told us the ~~to~~ story ^(lie) that her Swedish
mother was sick and she was distraught and
wanted to get transferred to London so she could
visit her mother. "Soft touch" I opened my trap.
That's it.

Enclosed please find all the memos I
think you are interested in and forgive me for not
writing sooner. The first I heard of your
disappointment in me was this past week from
Fred and I received your letter today.

Your Friend and fellow
pioneer for truth.

18062 Bluesail Dr.
Pacific Palisades, Calif.

Stephen J. [Signature]

P.S. Please let me hear from you again soon.
Good luck.