

Dear Howard,

11/20/72

Twixt the dark and the dinner, having spent a long day in Washington, an hour and a half in a dentist's chair, I've time for a contribution to one of both of two departments: Does that old sonofabitch have a short fuze? and/or Who's Up to What?

Bud had refused to pay the costs of my getting some picture I was sure I could get, so I increased the national debt and got them. Jim saw them all. He decided he wants to use some in the Ray habeas corpus, and I got enlargements made for him, etc. Then he decided he wanted to use the Dealey Plaza bum picture (aka as "Frenchy") and the Mexican sketch. I insisted that he include the original sketch. He may. I had enlargements made for him. Bit lo! I don't have the work Newcomb did originally. I know what I did with each of the four sets he sent me, and I know I had one in the envelope in which he mailed them all. I spent about a half day looking for these and means of duplicating them, wasting all of it save to learn that other of my things are missing. Example: the originals of the work Chapman did for me, the large enlargements you may recall, were on the top shelf of the hanging bookcase in my office, still in the wrapper Chapman used in 1968. Gone. Except for the misused Garrison made subsequently, which lingers like the taste of a bay rum hangover.

So, to help Jim, I provided him with leads: the date on which I sent one set to Bensky of Ramparts when they asked me to serve on the aborted King assassination committee; coverage of the press conference at which I used them in Mpls 5/17/68 (Note, long before Gough and Turner), and other things. My recommendation was that he ask Ramparts, which has originals, of get Jerry to ask Gough, who pirated the whole thing for the Times later, to plug himself.

I phoned Jim today. He had called Jerry. But, Jerry didn't have to bother Trent Gough. Wanna guess why? He has my original. Had. Jim now has them. In the envelope. Remember those long tirades in which he insisted he had returned all he had taken? And the other things unaccountably missing, like the Khrushchev file?

He was bland about it, telling Jim this is mine and returning them in the envelope.

There came a time when I had to insist that Jerry stop being a slob when he was here and protect me against his being a slob away from here by leaving a record of everything he took, where he took it, so that I would learn, in going to that file, that he had it. He agreed. If he did it in a single case, I haven't found it. There is none in the Newcomb file, none in the Chapman file, none in the Dealey Plaza Pictures files, none in any King file, as I know from having wasted a half day searching all possibilities.

From the narrow view of this abrasive old sonofabitch with the fabled short fuze, this is akin to theft. You know how free I may have been. There is nothing Jerry could not have had, or didn't. But telling me he had returned everything when I demanded it and not leaving a receipt when he promised it (indeed, should it have had to be saked?) rather limits the alternatives. A slob is a slob is a slob. But that explains only slobery. Not thievery. Not lying.

There isn't much I can do about it now, but you'd best know this for the future, whatever the explanation might be, and I can conceive relatively innocent ones, like ego hangups, untoward ambitions, etc. If it says but one thing, it says that Jerry's word is worth about as much as yesterday's used toilet paper.

Jim noticed a tiny squib in the Times to the effect that Marina has a case on appeal in which she alleges LHO was NOT the assassin. I'd be interested in anything you see on this, particularly the lawyers in the case. At an earlier stage, it held more potential. It still could, depending on who represents her. Mary is so turned off, for more than sufficient reason, including the most serious personal problem, I probably won't even write her. But I might. She is a legal secretary, for a partner in one of Dallas' most prestigious law firms. If necessary, after knowing more, I could write her. The appeal will go to the fifth circuit, in New Orleans.

Supertime,