

Demands retraction

LAFP 9/13/68

Local FBI Agent answers Mark Lane

ART KUNKIN

On August 2 and 9, 1968, the Free Press published columns by Mark Lane which reported the existence of a letter of grievances written by a group of Los Angeles FBI agents to Attorney-General Ramsey Clark.

The eight-page, single-spaced letter related what Lane termed "numerous acts of betrayal and incompetence" on the part of FBI officials. Singled out for criticism in the sections of the letter that Lane cited were J. Edgar Hoover and Wesley G. Grapp, Special Agent In Charge of the Los Angeles FBI office.

We have received a letter from Mr. Grapp protesting these charges. We publish Mr. Grapp's letter in full below, after we explain the circumstances which compel us to accede to his demands for "a public apology and a retraction of the untrue statements . . . pursuant to Section 48a of the California Civil Code."

A copy of the original eight-page letter of the FBI agents was sent to William Turner, former FBI agent who presently writes for Ramparts Magazine as a critic of the police establishment. Turner made the letter available to Mark Lane.

The letter has all the appearances of authenticity. It is on

FBI letterhead stationery. (The FP published a facsimile of the first page in its August 9 issue along with Lane's article.) Furthermore, the letter seems to contain many details which could only be known to FBI agents. Mark Lane felt that the public should be informed of the existence of this letter, since it is newsworthy when FBI agents criticize their own superiors.

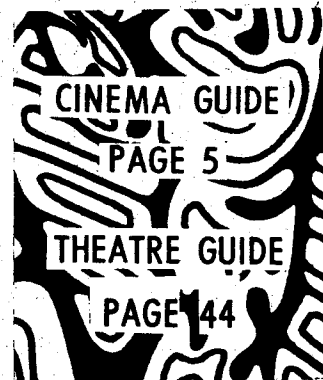
However, the copy of the letter that was sent to Bill Turner did not indicate who had signed the original mailed to the Attorney General. Evidently the FBI agents who wrote the letter did not want to have their names publicized, even though they wanted the contents made known.

In any case, because of the presently anonymous nature of the letter, the Free Press and Mark Lane can not substantiate the charges published in the FP against Wesley Grapp unless Attorney General Clark could be compelled to make public the letter as he received it. If the names of the original writers were thus available to the Free Press they could be compelled to appear in court and testify as to the truth of their original charges. But, since this is not likely to happen, we have no recourse except to print Mr. Grapp's letter in re-

traction.

There is, however, a sequel to the story, which the reader should be aware of before reading Mr. Grapp's words. Bill Turner recently visited the Free Press office and agreed to let me make a copy of the eight-page letter and envelope in which he received the letter. But when Turner took the letter out of his attache case, he noticed a brownish discoloration on several pages and remarked in a surprised voice, "This seems to have been bagged." He then explained that the attache case had been left in a hotel

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Grappling with matters

(Continued from page 1)
room recently because it was too clumsy to carry. Evidently someone had entered the unoccupied room and "dusted" the letter for fingerprints, causing the brown discoloration.

Was the FBI trying to find out the actual names of the signatories by determining who had handled the copy sent to Turner? Did Attorney General Clark really keep these names from the FBI? Whatever the background explanation, the fingerprints had not developed very clearly, and it is doubtful if any positive identification was made.

And, with this latest example of FBI procedure in mind, we present to the reader Mr. Wesley G. Grapp.

August 20, 1968

Gentlemen:

I am informed that your newspaper published the following materials on or about August 2, 1968:

"The letter states that various officials within the FBI instructed agents to make false statements under oath to the United States Civil Service Commission in a hearing involving former Special

Agent William Turner who is now a staff writer for Ramparts Magazine.

"On this question the agents concluded 'while we do not fully agree with methods he has chosen to strike back at Hoover and these people, we do know he was terribly wronged by the FBI through Grapp (Wesley G. Grapp, Special Agent in Charge of the Los Angeles Office)...

"He (Grapp) very badly botched the Kenneth John Young kidnapping case here in Los Angeles which occurred April 2, 1967. \$250,000 ransom was paid for the safe return of the victim, under watchful eyes of the F.B.I. Grapp's supervision was incredibly stupid. A taxicab used as cover in the payoff could not keep up with the kidnapper and he was lost, Grapp became hysterical at this point, tied up radio traffic with his obscenities, and instructions could not be gotten to surrounding agents in time to follow and apprehend the kidnapper after release of the victim... Hoover reportedly threatened both Grapp and Gale if the case is not solved, adding further incentive for the agents NOT to solve it. Unfortunately, Hoover and Grapp refused to tell the Chief of Police in Beverly Hills, where the kidnapping occurred, about the case, hoping for a quick solution and a grab of all the publicity."

Each and all of the statements underlined in above quotations are completely without foundation, are false and untrue and highly defamatory to me.

The facts are, among others:

(1) Neither I, nor did anyone else to my knowledge, instruct agents to make false statements to the U.S. Civil Service Commission or to any other commission for that matter;

(2) At no time did I wrong Mr. William Turner;

(3) The reason the kidnapper was not apprehended had nothing to do with the use of a taxi cab or its alleged mechanical condition. I did not botch or in any way mishandle the kidnapping case;

(4) I did not become hysterical in any sense of the term and did not cause any FBI radio channel

to be unuseable in any respect;

(5) I did not utter any obscenities into the radio;

(6) No Bureau official ever threatened me in any respect regarding the case and there has never been any incentive for agents not to solve the case; and

(7) Neither any Bureau official nor myself ever refused to tell the Chief of Police in Beverly Hills where the kidnapping occurred or about the case.

I hereby demand a public apology and a retraction of the untrue statements stated above pursuant to Section 48a of the California Civil Code.

Very truly yours,
Wesley G. Grapp
4240 Bon Homme Road
Woodland Hills, California.