

5/31/73
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Dear Jim, Lick

After you left I finished reading what Jimmy gave you. It has been on my mind while I did other things, including going over the other documents, all except the transcript. I'm not satisfied. I gave you immediate reaction on some of this, you will recall. Without being able to put everything else out of mind, I can't say I've sat down, concentrated on this, and have a firm conclusion. I have tried only to be my own devil's advocate. I think he may be trying to put us on or, if he assumes that I alone have investigated and know most of the fact we have, than trying to put me on.

It is but a few minutes from April Fool's Day and I've reformed a bit, going to be d earlier and trying to sleep later. However, I'll be up with the first lightening of the skies. You stay awake late enough to know this now is not much after 5. So, I'm not going to do a complete job. I'll give you enough to indicate the basis for my doubts and concerns.

The number I wanted was the New Orleans number. He knew that. He knew that I knew he knows it and he never hid or denied knowing it. He even told me how he could get it to me through censorship without giving it away to the censors. I don't remember knowing that there was a Baton Rouge number. I think I assumed it and tried it out on him. But the New Orleans number is without doubt the one he did recall and the one he knew I wanted.

There is nothing of that in here. Not even acknowledgement that it exists.

Why he went to all the trouble of making three checks on the Baton Rouge number I don't know. It seems to be much trouble for nothing. Why didn't he have checks made on the New Orleans number? Well, although he says nothing about it, he did, at least two of which I know. Both by very bad people, Stoner and Schoolfield. He wrote Schoolfield's name down for me, on a pad I showed you. He could have done the same with you with the number he gave you. I regard giving it to you backwards as hokus-pokus. No need for it and no disguise in it. There are simple codes that are safer and almost impossible to check. Like asking you your age and adding or subtracting it. Who would know but the two of you? The first thing anyone checking the reversed number would do if it didn't check out would be to reverse it.

If he lied to me in saying he didn't recognize the picture of John George Wyatt why should we assume that is his only lie? Could he not now be lying in saying as he thought about it the picture seemed familiar except for the shade of the hair? It happens I think he is right on that, but that also is an obvious dodge. I did tell him about John George (really Owen) Wyatt and all his connections. So, he knew what I had in mind and it is not impossible that he constructed this for my benefit. What I find hard to believe is that when he knew this and had at least an inkling of what I know, he was silent about his inquiries that duplicate, or come close to that. If he didn't know about Partin, I told him. So, he had all he needed for a manufacture for me. If he made it up, he knew there was a basis for my going for it.

On the other hand, he is a strange type and he could have been silent knowing which way my thoughts went.

Stoner as much as threatened me on the New Orleans number, you may recall. I gave you his letter on this. Jerry told me that Stoner said it was bad medicine, someone could get killed. He also said that Stoner got up tight at the mere mention. I can believe it.

I know the way I work. I am sure I gave Jimmy pretty complete explanations. If I did not give him all the possibilities, I do remember one I did go into, that it could have been a pay phone in a candy store or something like that.

The lies he told me are few. Most cluster around New Orleans. He was also incomplete about his visits there. I got Jerry mad enough for him to blab a bit, so I know Jimmy knows more about New Orleans than he admitted. I also tripped him up on where he had and had not been. He had been where he said he had not. He correctly identified a picture before he realized it.

If I am not saying this has to be a put on, I am saying it can be. There are some parts of it that can, with a little care, be checked up here.

He says he had Jerry check on this number with Schoolfield in the middle of 1972. He told me in May that he had just asked Stoner to get Schoolfield to do some checking on the New Orleans number. Jerry was not to see James in the middle of 1972, unless my recollection is wrong. He went to Chicago after we parted and didn't go back south until

cold weather. I think about a month before the election.

His story about the tavern makes little sense. He wanted to know if any of Partin's people lived near there? He told me he had a meeting in one bar only. Could have been a lie, but he was explicit. It was about four blocks from the river on Canal, Quarter side of Canal. That is anything but a residential area. Only thugs would live there, and he doesn't say he was looking for those types. However, from this paragraph, he is lying. One of two ways. In the paragraph and his alleged purposes or in telling me he was unfamiliar with New Orleans. How could a man not quite familiar with the city know whether any address not in that block of Canal was near it?

If he had the phone number checked out for the third time recently, he had visitors or whom we don't know of Jerry did it again. Or he has some kind of communications system.

I still can't understand why he has withheld the few leads he could have given me from me when I asked for them when he knows his enemies have them. That weighs heavily. It makes no sense but he was persistent.

There are parts that seem to make no sense that might if we make allowances for his manner. There are omissions that need not have been held back: example, if by saying he got the word that six people were close to Partin he got the names, he doesn't give them. Or, there are more than six close to him, if there are no names.

This is all that comes to mind, off the top of it. I'm going to turn in. I think we should think this through with care, taking time. I also don't like some other things, like getting in touch with Ryan without checking with you. I think you should be firm on things like this. I could give a special explanation to his concern over my interest in detail.

Let me be brief in summing up a lingering question in my mind. He was in a criminal relationship with others. He may not have known correct names for those others, but he does have means of leading to them. He has every reason to assume a) that they did the job and b) deliberately framed him with it. If we assume either of these things, how can we explain his withholding all help on this from us or regarding silence as in any way to his interest? The ways in which I can make sense of this are few and uncomfortable. He has to know that if the government doesn't know who these people are, the chances are they have a pretty good idea. I think they know and I so told him. He is thus satisfied for the government to know what his own defense doesn't. Carrying this further, he also has to expect that these people, knowing he can finger them, trust him not to. That is not normal.

I was not aware that Hoffa Jr. had been sentenced to 40 years and got out. Is it so?

Best,