

12/2/70

Dear Mr. Frankel and Mr. Vanecur,

My profound respect for and deep appreciation of your magnificent and important Army-intelligence story on "First Tuesday". As a writer with intelligence experience and as a citizen concerned over the erosion of freedom -and as the victim of some of the official excesses, I want to convey what I know is more than one man's opinion that you have done an enormously-important public service.

I would appreciate a transcript and permission to use parts, with attribution, if I find it appropriate in my own future writing.

And I do hope you will find it possible to present this really fine job of significant investigating reporting in more permanent form, a book.

Your Minnesota sequences in particular interested me because of what happened when my baggage was intercepted after I made a mid-May speech in Minneapolis in 1968. My topic was "The Integrity of Our Society", and I dealt largely with such investigative abuses. Alert students spotted older men in the audience, equipt with a poorly-hidden tape recorder. When this was reported to the University representative in my presence, I lavished kindnesses and extra considerations on these men, like spelling names, telling them (truthfully) that long-winded as I can be, I had made arrangements for a dub of the official tape for them, things like that.

At the airport I watched my baggage go down the proper (Braniff) chute and without further concern took an originating plane that stopped when I debarked, at Kansas City, ending at Dallas. There was no baggage for me at Kansas City, I caused a search to be made before the plant left. It had not been left at Minneapolis, for a phone call was made in my presence. It had not been located by 2 a.m., when I returned to the airport after my appearance. By then the plane had ended its run.

A day or two later, Braniff located this baggage in the hands of another airline, which could not explain its presence, in a city to which my plane did not go. A brand new typewriter was professionally destroyed-without a scratch to the case. A brand new tape recorder was fixed so that while performing beautifully on playback, it could not record. My Val-a-pak had been hung without removing heavy books from a pocket, thus tearing the handle loose. And every scrap of paper, including packets of matches, was taken. My clothes were in poor condition. Records exist, for Braniff was very decent, making good what they properly could.

I had to junk the typewriter (and was unable to use it during my investigations). The damage to my tape recorder was so skilfully handled that the expert who handled the servicing and repairing of such machines for the New Orleans police told the detective who tried to get it repaired rapidly for me that he couldn't possibly do and guarantee the job in less than 10 days to two weeks. So, I couldn't use it in my work, either. After three trips back to the factory, this machine is still not dependable.

I knew some federal investigators are not overjoyed at my work. Now I wonder if I'd suspected the wrong ones.

With sincere respect,

Harold Weisberg