

Dear Bud and Jim,

12/12/75

Bud's call troubled me because there is too much wrong with three Times reporters going to see him at one time when one would ordinarily be plenty. The possible explanations range from each working on a different aspect of the Ray case to wanting plenty of witnesses.

Of the three I am not sure about Horrocks but I believe he has been conned by government people. I know both Crewdson and Frankling have been conned, Crewdson by both the FBI and CIA and Frankling by Jones Harris on a story that could have been checked and found false by a single phone call.

Because I have been troubled by all of this I tried to reach ^{Mo} at the Times today. I think I've tried to reach him about every day this week. The message at the Times, on his dial-direct number, was that he is "unreachable." This is an exceptional message and it troubles me separately.

I have learned where ^{Mo} is. He is at the Central Holiday Inn in Memphis. I rather suspect he may have been dividing his time between there and elsewhere but this is guesswork. His room did not answer. He did not respond to a page supposedly at the bar and the restaurant. I also think his wife is with him. She has not once answered his home phone this week. I left the message that if he can to return my call within an hour otherwise to please call me in the morning. We'll see.

I've taken time out for a long check with another reporter I trust. He knows some of those the Times has on the story. It is his belief that there is virtually no possibility that this is not a government operation and he agrees that the government has the urgent need right now. When I tried my reasoning on him he stayed ahead of me. It was that clear to him. He finds sending three reporters to see Bud outside his long experience and for no apparent journalistic purpose. He also finds it exceptional that regardless of what the Times has, thinks it has or is working on that the clear and irrefutable proof that even if Ray were guilty he was framed in Memphis, his inter-preparation of the windowill story alone, was not worth any mention today. He is surprised there was none and that there was no Times request for the copies I offered.

There are going to be serious problems. Some will be legal. I think it would be wise for Bud to have experienced counsel on a standby basis. He may need one. Jim and I less so. My own opinion is that if the Times has the kind of story I can anticipate, or a series, it will amount to a conspiracy with the government. I do not think that on this, with the Times having started with me and then staying away when Bud tells them to talk to me, they can claim First amendment. It will be deliberateness, a refusal to confront or check with the one person best able to confront whatever they may have.

There are possibilities of which I can think, echoes of Cliff. I have never had any doubt that the FBI knows with whom Jimmy was and that the offer O'Connor made to Bud, triggered by 718-70, was in the hope Jimmy could do what it could not, prove they did the killing.

I have one comfort in this. I have a friend I believe to be incorruptible. I do at some point expect to hear from him, perhaps in confidence.