Dear Phil, 9/28/84

There can be some danger in what you have in mind, so let me begin, assuming you decide to see Ray and he agrees, which is not unlikely, by calling to your attention the fact that one of the remarkably few areas in which I ultimately found him lying is the matter of the aliases. To flesh his lying out, he lied about a claimed unfamiliarity with New Orleans and I believe he lied in telling me that when he left Memphis he planned to go to N.O. and then changed his mind. I remember no other outright lies. Instead, and this is important in you interview him, he'd go into something else or, infrequently, just tell me he'd not talk about that.

So, why would he lie about the originoof his aliases? The most obvious explanation is protecting someone else or fear of not protecting someone else.

Of the aliases the one where the lie is obvious is Galt, so the questioning about Galt, I'd urge, be the very last thing you go into.

You may find him unwilling to talk about any identification of Raoul. His position with me is that he would not be a squealer and would not do the work of the FBI for it, that simple and that forthright. He could always have directed others to Raoul through his means of contact, if only a phone numner. As I recall he told me that the phone he called was at a bar and I know he told me that he met with Raoul in N.O. on his second trip from California in a Canal street bar in about the fourth block and on the Quarter side. I pushed him for the numbers and he once promised and then wouldn't. Not even when it might have been useful in his own defense.

I suggest that if all these people have pressured you to ask him questions it would be a good idea to get them on paper and then let me go over them and see if they suggest anything or recall to my mind what he told me.

If you write him his number is 65477 and when last I heard from him he was in Station A, whatever that is, at the Nashville State Pen.

When you talk bout his having been burned by so many, first I tell you that no Ray ever learned. As I used to tell Jerry, even a n infant knows after the first time what a hot iron is. And next I tell you that he was never burned when he had not brought it on himself. Most of the time it was after I warned him, and he still did not learn. So far as I know, he still thinks highly of Lane, who hurt him most of all, a ter Huie and Foreman. All the rays have mind set that will not change.

There may be some incentive for him in the information you have, but I think you ought not offer him any and limit him to what he can deduce from your questions. For all the incredibly stupid things he has done, he has a sharp mind he inhibits by the kind of person he is and a kind of paranoia. I believe he is also anti-Semitic. (Jerry just wrote me spelling it "anti-Semantic.)

I don't need the information your sources want you to keep from everyone but him but I think that would be a mistake for them and for you. Bear in mind the fact that he cannot but know who did the actual killing, or at least was behind or involved in it, whether or not he knows right names, and he may well, despite denial. So what those people arentelling you is that only you, Ray and these others may know. It is foolhardy to assume that he cannot get in touch still in any emergency. We do not know and we ought not gamble in what could be dangerous.

You are wrong in believing that he wants to turn up what the authorities did not. He is interested in only what he thinks can get him out without involving anyone else. Every thing he's gone for so far is absolutely nutty.

I regard your 2, the lawyer claiming he has something exculpatory of Ray involving Jim's Grill, as valueless today. I mean not only for me (and I may have the same thing in different form) but because nobody will pay any attention to s

single statement, particularly from a dead person.

My hunch is that if and when you are 1) completely prepared and b) about to go, that you ask him through Lesar, not me, and that this is better than if you write him. I think if Jim identifies you as a college professor who is teaching a course and conducting you own investigation, based on the belief he is not the assassin, and that Jim knows you to be an OK guy, that is enough and the best approach.

When you say the real John Willard which one do you mean?

Les Whitten's piece was barbered before Anderson used it. The Wash. Post killed it entirely. What Les referred to is what the DJ lawyers said in their appeals brief. They have developed an explanation of sorts, that what they really meant was the case record. They quite obviously meant what the column said, and they'd said it in a different way at district court level.

I think it is both reasonable and usual for your Canadian reporter to consider his Raoul information his. And that he ought be careful who he trusts with it, most of the people who've written being utterly irresponsible. But he ought also fimd those he can trust to check out what can be checked out. He has accomplished nothing by sitting on it all these years and if he doesn't have all of it on paper, he may not remember either all the information or the information exactly as it reached him.

I know Jimmy well enough to be without any doubt at all that there had to be someone like the person he calls Raoul. Example: he had the address of the flophouse written down and still could not find it when he was on the right street.

I'm inclined not to believe the version of the envelope's cantents you got from McDouldton. Jimmy was careful not to tell Huie, Hanes, Foreman, Bud, Jim or me anything he didn't want to say, so while all the Rays do strange things, I'm not inclined to believe he would have even had any such letter in an envelope. And I can think of no reason for McD not having taken any such emvelope to the police and, if afraid, just disappear. Nobody could have identified or located him. He also would know that Ray would know the truth and could point at him.

Have you asked yourself why, if the man Ray knew as Raoul, wanted Ray to know nothing about him, he would have let anyone else in the same general area know him by the same name? I think he'd have used a special name for Ray to know him by. (Ray still spells it "Roual.")

And have you asked yourself why, if Ray were in contact with anyone who would or could give him escape instructions he would have been so little shy on cash that he could not take a boat from Portugal? About $100 is all. Any confederate would have been good for that and a bit more, I'm confident.

All sorts of people have come up with all sorts of stories and many have gotten others to believe them. I suggest you give all of this more thought.

And, of course, Igll be interested in how he explains, if he says anything, how he got those aliases, especially Galt's, which could have come from a signature only.

Best wishes,

Harold

CC:JL

Weren't you going to tell me something about the Florida case in which Galt was a witness? I'm interested in the names and charges.

September 26, 1984

Dear Harold,

I have a request to make, the impetus for which comes from both my own research and from the urgings of some of my sources of MLK data. Specifically, what about the possibility of my having a conversation with Ray? Let me explain the genesis and parameters of this idea.

For openers, some of the most valuable sources I have--the real Eric Galt, two Toronto journalists, the real John Willard and a Toronto cop who worked on the case--have urged (even, at times, I would say--pressured) me to try to ask Ray some questions about the aliases. I agree that it would surely be historically-journalistically valuable to my research to be able to ask some questions, even if there is little or no chance of obtaining an illuminating answer.

There are only two matters that I want to inquire about--matters which, respecting your differing opinions about what is and is not important--I regard as important; matters concerning which I am expert (although my knowledge of this case in toto is surely at comic-book levels compared to your encyclopedic grasp): 1. the Galt alias 2. the "fat man". That's all I want to inquire about--exclusively.

Having talked with Ray's landlady, Mrs. Loo, and with the fat man, I want to ask Ray about the incident. I don't believe that Ray has ever been asked about the Galt alias by someone who knows all about the real Galt, etc.

Of course, having been burned by assorted, nefarious lawyers, scribes, and newshounds, why should Ray bother? (even though he doesn't have to answer, much less answer candidly). The possible incentive is to obtain information, some of which I possess; some of which isn't mine but I can get clearance from the people who gave it to me in confidence. They won't--they claim--clear it for me to publish or to pass on to other researchers, but they will clear it for Ray (don't ask me why; I think it is more ego-rewarding for them).

I really have little idea if this data would be at all useful, except that I presume that Ray has an interest in turning up

anything the authorities either neglected or suppressed. Four areas of "new" (so far as I know) information.

1. The sketchy but intriguing "Raoul" data developed by the Canadian reporter who still considers it his. HSCA has or had much of it and suppressed it. The reporter is giving me static about clearing it for circulation

2. A lawyer claims he has a sworn statement (I haven't seen it) from a now deceased Jim's-Grill witness--a statement ~~ϕϕϕ~~ which he claims to have obtained and checked out in Memphis and which he claims is exculpatory of Ray (he'll probably give it to me if it's going to Ray. This guy has a huge ego).

3. Maybe Ray would like to know about the real Galt's travels and background, and national-security work, etc. which are terribly intriguing even if he insists its all coincidence

4. Ray might be interested in what the fat man has to say

I'm writing to you because this is a serious idea. If it was a throw-away, I could just write Ray out-of-the-blue and I'm sure he'd never respond.

Let me know what you think.

Did the FBI put any of their character-assassination dis-information about you and Lesar on paper or did they just mouth it to the court? It wasn't clear from Jack Anderson's piece. Too bad you couldn't sue the bastards for malicious damage, etc.

Best regards,

Phil