

Dear Jim,

3/18/75

When you phoned it was not your sweet one's articulation of chow time that caused me to forget. I just plain forgot. While Henry Searupa of the Baltimore Sunday Sun was here today (from 10 a.m. to 5:15 p.m., with no lunch break) among the many phone interruptions was a call from John Fox of the Reporters' Committee for Freedom of Information (if that is the name). He wanted to know the status of my case, so I asked which one. He apparently was unaware that he had a choice, that there was more than one.

I updated him on spectro and we, perhaps on his questioning, went into the transcript case. With more tact and ~~stink~~ diplomacy that I felt the situation warranted I told him there were several new aspects they appear to have missed, and not because you and I had not given Landau a copy of the book and an explanation.

He agreed that horn-to-horn, toe-to-toe on whether or not there was a "national security" justification was new and news; that proving a negative against the government also was; and that daring it to charge me with perjury in the course of it was something less common than the rising of the sun; and that it is just possible that with Casell having ingored the question of who committed perjury, Baselon might not have.

Yes, he agreed, there were these "new" handles.

Who knows, maybe someone will, yet realize that last yearx this was even news, as reporters spell it.

I updated him on spectro. He didn't even know it was the first filed under the amended law. I told him you found no line to head at 9 that a.m. And that while before they had gone to the Supreme Court, this time they were sweetness and light, FBI style, offering full compliance.

We'd welcome it, I said, and we'll also believe it - after performance.

He was to have called you. I suggested it, gave him your phone number, and asked him to return whatever xeroxes he asks of you. Apparently he had not phoned by several hours later because you did not mention it.

From this it would seem that our under-the-wire visit was unreported.

Henry Searupa's questioning got off interestingly. Pretty soon he got into my being "fired" by the "LaFollette Committee." I laughed quietly and said he'd been into his morgue but apparently it wasn't very dependable. Then I explained that a) LaFollette couldn't "fire" me because I wasn't on his payroll, and I explained that part fully; that it wasn't really the "LaFollette" committee but was more accurately described by the title line I had on the hearings, "Civil Liberties." To this I added much other detail, like how I got around the combined LaFollette and FDR opposition to continuing the hearings for the migratory farm worker/ California investigation and did he remember Grapes of Wrath? (If you don't know this story and all its parts, a good time is when Oral History Wrono is around.) I then, without making any reference to Martin Dies, told him that Paul Ward's stories were a disappointment of me because I'd had a healthy respect for him until he either violated confidence, misquoted or both, I did not remember which or details, only impression. That was the end of that. But the point is that the only reference to my being "fired" was by Dies. He knew, as he seems to have put it, that I had "leaked" confidential material to the Daily Worker. I told him I had no confidential material, that this committee had not held any executive sessions, that its record was public, that it was not the Daily Worker in any event by a labor news syndicate (I told him where to find that reporter, who has a N.C. p.r. agency) and rather than "confidential" material it was ~~xxx~~ galley proofs of a hearing.

It was all very polite, friendly and pleasant, this part and after it was immediately abandoned. He could have gone to his morgue, he could have found this distortion there, and he abandoned it at this point, which is not to say that he intended otherwise. I don't know and didn't ask.

(Somewhere I have a picture of me of that period. It will convince you, if

of nothing else, that while your generation may have invented SDS, it did not invent hair. Paul Ward did so, a kind of flinking outside the Dies secret hearing room but I don't remember the details. I probably have the clipping somewhere if that also is not something the Hollywood Ten did not return. Now on hair again, that place Hunt and Cushman talked about on that clandestine tape was a fine Spanish restaurant in the Washington Building, of which you have heard in another context.

The maitre was an Armenian who called himself Parker. When I got there there was first the exclamation, "Tasahs-kah-neeeeny!" followed by an embrace. To him I looked like a violinist, therefore I was Toscanini. We didn't really resemble each other and T's hair was gray, which mine isn't yet.

Anyway, I did not indicate my surprise at the manner of the beginning of this interview and that manner did not get me to change anything I said. It lasted seven hours, minus a number of interruptions, on several of which, with permission, I had him on an extension. Fox was one, Finley another. He was not in any sense unpleasant about this, so I'm making no inferences and drawing no conclusions. It is right and proper for a reporter to consult his morgue. Somehow, however, his reflection of it did not include what I know is in that morgue, me and cooking, Bill and cooking, and my Cease for Peace project. Also my (successful) suit(s) against the government on noise, in Baltimore.

When he finished taping I told him I was surprised. At what? At his asking no questions about WW IV. It seems that he had not had that in particular in kind. More me, a Marylander. Legit. But I did remind him that it is the current book and that for any of his paper's readers there is no other way of getting it.

He was interested in Russell. I added a little to what is in the book.

He was not interested in the transcript.

Or LHO as an agent/

Or Altes, CIA, etc.

I followed his interests and questions and was myself, for all the world as though I did not see anything unusual in the selective and even then incomplete reflection of the contents of his paper's morgue. (There are three papers.)

He says he is going to transcribe (WOW! Seven hours?) and might then call me. I said fine, please do.

There was nothing in his manner or words to indicate any unfriendly intent. I merely report and record. I am not anticipating another eg Goulden. If it happens, it will happen. But it will not reflect the interview if it does.

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Don't copy the O'Tooling/in Penthouse. I received a copy today, thanks.

I think it would be nice if someone other than we asked NYReview what the exact Warren Commission document is that says this man in CE237 actually represented himself as LHO. I don't think there is such a document. Just a naive inquiry from an innocent reader. It ought not be from Frederick, Md. Even Garrison didn't claim that.

This is a very dubious venture and not only because it is public identification of Bud with O'Toole. Larry read wire-service copy to me. But it does have Bud in the position of endorsing O'Toole publicly. Obviously the story was placed as puffery for the book, so it means further identifications of Bud with the book. Public, that is.

O'Toole got a good Chicago play, electronic and print. CDW's Eaton covered Press Club press conference. Page one, one edition only. Mike real.

Jerry was also on TV there on the naming names bit.

Nice [Note from Traci] Coffin today. His undated newsletter makes ref to WWIV. Not ready yet. Best,