

2/25/70

Dear Gary,

I've about a half hour before lunch and, having taken care of the mail, instead of doing the NO papers I'm writing you and you alone about something I've been intending to for a while. It is with the undersending you say and do nothing about it except give me whatever thoughts you may have.

If you read O in NO as carefully as I think you did, you know that before I went to NO the first time I did have doubts about Russo. On that trip I learned that I knew of him what they did not, that he had copies of LHO's lit and had not disposed of it. They were unwilling to believe it, so I phoned Lil, got the name of the reporter who had noticed it in writing a sports report about him at Baton Rouge (baseball), and gave this to Jim. If they ever checked further into it, I have seen no evidence of it.

Had it been up to me or possible for me, I'd have investigated Russo. Without sanction, there was no possibility of my doing this without a big and very delicate thing developing, so as an alternative, I spent whatever time with him I could when he and I were in the office together. I was able to develop a fair amount of material, much solid basis for suspicion, and I got no satisfactory answers from him.

D., whose values were never appreciated, had been out with him and Martens, and not just once. What a strange mixture in so large a town! And how odd a continuing, friendly relationship between Martens and Russo, a "victim", a "friend" of the accused, and the "prime" witness! Perry not only did not deny this social relationship, he expanded on it, telling me what D did not know. How much of it is entirely true, I do not know. Some I do believe, like M seeming to have funds available that could not have come from his employment. There is no reason to believe his mother could have supplied it (or would) or that his father did (the home broke by the time he was 19, before the assassination. Yet M had an expensive car, etc., and, what Perry added, seemed to have enough money to drop, regularly, about \$40 in gambling. Meanwhile, first pretending not to recall, Russo then had only an indefinite recollection of having this handbill and says he kept things like that and used them as bookmarks. I asked him to get it for me. He said it was in his father's house and his father would not let him in. I asked him to get his brother to retrieve, and apparently the same antagonistic relationship exists. It is obvious a phone call to the father would have done the necessary, or that the propose would have overcome the situation.

Remember Russo's story that Landry's folks had asked him to intercede with Ferrie, to detach their son? Well, I have seen a rather abundant Landry file, not through Jim, and there is no indication of this, no mention of his name, etc.

The combination of things leads me to the possibilities. The two most obvious are variants of one, that Russo was a plant, for the accomplished purpose. The questions are is he that kind of guy, did he do it just for kicks or the attention it would get him? Or did someone put him up to it? If the stories (all of which go back to him) of the problems he had making a living are true, then it would seem he was not paid for this. At least, not in advance. I have no reason to believe he was an agent of some kind, but his function, like that of others, was so close to agency does it make any difference? It is strange and perplexing. Distressing, too, that no one in the entire office ever considered any investigation of any of the friendlies. To see if they were, most obviously, and to see if truthful. Jim has the ego that would have told him his own judgement is all he needed. The others would not cross him, do what he did not authorize.

This leads me to other not-unrelated thoughts. In this case, there can be an accusing finger at Moo, the Phelan thing. However, in the absence of real reason to believe otherwise, I know it is possible to omit the biggest single thing, having already reported it and just overlooking it. Had I not done this so often myself I'd not be as willing to concede the possibility. I do know that Phelan did not ask the direct question of Russo, for Matt was there and I believe Matt to be truthful (he has remained silent to me).

So, there is no solid accusation against Moo here. Possible, yes.

Recall the scene I described to you after one of my trips, the one on which I started in Minn? Where I confronted Moo, in front of Jim, at the NOAC, on their breach of trust in calling the boy in and questioning him when they were not in a position to ask even his age and have an answer for checking his accuracy? This came to pass when Moo told Lou to get him in for Lou and Alcock to question. I should have thought this through then but didn't. They would not have done this on Moo's word alone. I think Moo was instructed. I will never forget his out-of-character placidity at the tough things I told him, to his face, in front of Jim, nor the ever-increasing purple in Jim's, as he looked at Moo, not me. As I think about this, I believe the normal Moo reaction would have been to leave me alone in the nose. He is bigger, younger, and an accomplished boxer. But he took it, without any meaningful answer.

I have earlier written you about the possibility Boxley was doing only what he was told to. I believe you told me Mary had suggested this to you, or she told me. I think that traced back to Boxley. However, after my recent conversation with Palmer, I am more persuaded this is likely. This does not pardon Boxley, nor diminish the horror he almost brought to pass. His and Moo's relationships with Jim are different. Moo's is one in which he either does what Jim says or is prepared to leave the office. His future is closely tied to Jim's, and I have not much doubt he has a genuine attachment that probably works both ways.

From materials I have had access to recently, the total absence of any reference to or indication of Russo in connection with Ferrie serves to make me wonder about so much, with a basis I didn't have earlier. This is part of the reason I have been trying to get the NOPD I.U. pre-assassination files on both Ferrie and LdO....It may also be part of the reason I haven't gotten the...But, if you have been thinking of the N.O. stuff passing between Paul and me recently, when I should not be taking the time from other work, this may expand the reasons that should have been obvious. For now and unless I say otherwise, keep it to yourself. I expected Moo to phone me yesterday p.m., and I had hoped Lou would phone me after getting my letter, but neither has. I also suggested to Moo, in the few words we had time to exchange, that he might want to talk to Lou before returning call. Aside from the general condition in the office, he may also have been too busy.

On another subject. I presume, with a week having passed, that my sugar-tolerance test was within normal range.

Sincerely,