

PH-This is for your information only, not even for discussion. Please return it for my Jerry file. I would prefer that you not keep a copy. If you feel otherwise, o.k., but nobody is to see it. The intellectual, ethical and moral toilet is already overflowing. HW

6/22/72

Dear Gary and Jerry (cc Howard),

Howard has just phoned me about several things. I restrict myself to one.

Sylvia told him that she had gotten a copy of the Burkley death certificate from Jerry, who told her he got it from Gary. Gary is one of two in which I had such implicit trust that I gave each copies, in specified strictest confidence, to be certain that if anything happened to me or my files that would be preserved. Until recently I followed this procedure with everything of consequence. Relatively recently it not only became clear that this procedure might present new problems, but it became a financial burden I could not justify. I just can't afford the copying paper.

That either one of you would do such a thing I would never have considered within possibility. That both of you did, and both knowing full well what was involved, what inevitably would happen, stuns me more than I can say, so I don't try.

I have long known and joked about so many of my "friends" who eliminated my need of enemies and so many of my "enemies" who helped me as no friend did. But that you two, loving the two of you as I would my sons, could bring yourselves to do so utterly and completely a disreputable a thing and then to Lil and me is beyond belief, even after I know it.

If we had the cost of getting that and the related papers I got, with my time compensated at charwoman's wages, we'd not be in debt. If we had at guild rates the cost of doing the book its use will effectively kill we'd be able to live comfortably for years. And continue the work that neither of you does, that of all the big-talkers and self-seekers only Howard and Paul even try to do in any way that has or can have meaning.

You are both privy to all the details of the miserable Ned business and many other things. Yet you did this knowing that, its potential, and our feelings?

Many disagreeable things have happened to us during these long and painful years the burdens of which bear so heavily upon us both. I think none can hurt as much, personally or financially.

I spare you the characterization of your peefidy that in my most impassioned and eloquent moments I could not do justice to. Instead I tell you these simple things:

I do not want to hear from you again, either or you; or see you again.

The one thing I would like is that you both return everything I have ever sent you. I do not demand it, for there is nothing I can do about it, but I do ask it. There is nothing I have given you that I did not give in trust. I need no further demonstration that either of you knows the meaning of the word.

As I told Howard when he reported the foregoing and what I will not address, I have a convenient ethical and moral comparison, James Earl Ray. He is in jail for a crime he did not commit. He can point to those who did. He has not and he will not. He is a lifelong criminal, but he does live by his principles. If I do not and cannot agree with his principles, I can and I do respect his dedication to them. Increasingly I find I can say this of fewer and fewer of those I have trusted and loved.

I know Lil has felt of both of you as she would were you her sons. I have written this without consultation with her. I will send it. But I will not remove it from the typewriter until she has read it and, if she disagrees, expresses it. She asked me about Howard's call and I told her the essence, so she knows. And instead of closing with the disgust and contempt I feel, I ask you to consider why the so-called "critics" have accomplished so little, with what you have just done as the beginning-point of your thinking.

Lil did read the first page. She then asked me if I want to be this firm and final. In saying it she reminded me how often she had raised questions about my limitless trusting of so many people. I tell you what I told her: I don't think that with so shocking an experience I am capable of dispassionate thought. She then asked if I do not want to hold off on mailing the letter a few days. I asked her a question and told her my feeling. The question is, could she find any justification of what either of you has done. She can't. And I told her that while I doubt I will ever forget this, I want to try and get it out of my mind, to the degree I can, beginning as soon as I can.

Gary, you are a clinical psychologist. If my reasoning, if that is what I can call it, is sound, you will know, as you will if it is other than the professional advice you would give. You see, it is really your advice I am taking. It is you who counselled me to cut myself off from everyone I could, telling me that my taking the time to share with those whose motives and morals you questioned merely interfered with the constructive uses to which I could put that time.

I know I will never completely forget this. But I feel I should start trying as soon as I can. Especially because it is you two, Gary who knows the state of our health and its problems and Jerry who knows the conditions of our life from being here so often and being so aware of the manifestations of poverty that can't be hidden.

There is one thing I want you to know. I recognize it may reflect intent rather than capability. I am only too acutely aware of the limitations of poverty. This is copyrighted material. It is exclusively the product of my work, exclusively. "Nobody, in any remote way, helped me with it. I know that government papers are not copyrightable. But I also know that the uses to which they are put are and that the copies I made available were accompanied with the covering letters showing they are my work, that they were delivered for and to me. Therefore, I will seek to enforce this copyright that I do have. Howard can tell you that he has seen it. All three parts of POST MORTEM were separately copyrighted. It is my view that it cannot be used without my permission, and you both have copies of my letters to Ned on this. You also both agreed with them.

I don't see how you can undo what you have done. Frankly, I don't see how you can live with it, either. I couldn't.

Dear Js, I inflict this on you so that a copy may be in the hands and files of one other than those involved. I can't begin to tell you the whole story, but it involves a whole series of things I obtained that the WC never had, ranging from the original of the remaining autopsy holograph (in color, with blood) to the missing receipts (don't add up), an accounting of the autopsy film, chain of possession on it and what is in immediate question, it being the only thing of which I was told, the missing death certificate. I can simplify this for you by telling you I have the original and five copies - a title of a chapter on it, in fact. Burdley placed the rear wound at the 3rd cervical vertebra. Or, another living end of the whole fiction. Exactly where I placed that wound in WW, by the way. Wecht, who didn't understand the panel report - I had to explain it to him for his testimony on it and as a matter of historical record taped it - and has never done any original work, but has read all of mine, including the unprinted, has finally been granted access to the film. This is the other thing Howard told me that I didn't address. I will not take time to explain the evil this can make possible precisely because of his eminence, the exculpation of the guilty, etc. Nor can I take out of his head what stuck, from his public statements little enough. Howard, who is opposed to the entire thing and regards it as rotten and unethical, feels he must make the effort to give Wecht a cram session to diminish the possibility of hurt and error. I told him to think it through for himself, to be certain that he believes at the time he does or does not do whatever he does or does not do that it is right, and that whichever way he decides, I will not chide him. The poor kid is in a bad spot. Wecht and Meagher even used him to ask me to go to New York next week to brief Wecht. I told him that aside from the personal considerations which are important to me that I did not conceive that something I regard as wrong somehow became right if I associate with it. He knew this was my belief and has, on his own and independently, read all my correspondence with all the people involved. He comes here when he can, goes over whatever files he wants without supervision, borrows for copying whatever he wants, returns it when he has copied. Last week he decided to read those files and discussed them after he did. He was shocked at what the others had not sent him, knowing what they did. Best W