

12/31/72

Dear Dione,

For a week I've felt a little guilty about not writing you when you phoned and asked me to. I don't really have the time now. But I can't walk past the (living) Xmas tree, see the decorations you made and sent, and not be reminded.

I guess the real reason I didn't when you phoned is because you both lied and sought to deceive in that conversation, and I'd hoped all of that might by now be behind you. Also, I asked you to write me about something, you said you would, and you didn't.

The last time I saw you, a year ago just before Thanksgiving, you also lied to me. As in the past, I didn't tell you you were lying. I let it pass. That was after you made me pretty conspicuous by calling up the motel and leaving no messages when asked, when you said you were taking me to dinner and let me pay the check (as I'd intended anyway).

I never told you, or at least if I did I don't remember, but from close to the first I recognized that you were feeding me an awful load of b.s. I also recognized that some of it was quite reasonable. If I did not tell you, I had Bourne's juvenile investigation of you and Philip and remember it well enough to know that Philip called his gang The March Murraders. If I did not tell you, I interviewed both his parents before the father was killed and got much that you did not supply and I suspect might have. I think I did tell you that I made a deal to protect Philip, kept it, did protect him, and he also told me much, including some things I did not know and did not suspect. By and large, my judgement was good on what to check of what you said to me. There is nothing I decided to check out that I could that did not stack. Some of it led me to what I had not believed could have happened but without question did.

So you won't have reason to think I'm returning the compliment by giving you b.s., I did not believe your stories about flying with Ferrie and never checked them or your tale about helping him reassemble or repair an old plane in an abandoned building. But I did believe your Bringuier stories involving Philip and my belief in them does not rest on his confirmation but on receipts between the two of them that I have, dated.

So far as your driving across the lake to the camp is concerned, if my memory does not fail me, I think I have the name of the neighbor who loaned you a pickup truck. You also gave me his name, in an entirely different context. Does it begin with an "H"?

What seemed credible to me I proceeded with on my own and in my own way. When I last saw you, I asked a simple question of you, that you separate the b.s. from the reality, on the rest. When you said what I did not and do not believe, that you were "afraid of Layton 'n 'em", I did not hassle you. There was and is no way your separating fancy from reality with me could hurt you, and you have every reason to know it. From the first I have been aware that you could have been improvising on what you had heard. However, there are some things not in that category, and it is not by accident that I am not here specific. You pulled some pretty tall ones (was it speed?), but I never said you were lying and I never did anything to suggest I didn't believe you, even about chasing cars. I don't think that as of now you know what I did and did not credit.

Another thing I do not believe is that you did not get the last letter I sent you at Metairie. You said this when you phoned. You do not know why I sent you the sketch. If I do not know why you wanted to avoid this, I did have a reason. You have no way of knowing it.

On the other hand, you did a number of foolish things that could have hurt you. In each case where it was possible, I protected you. If you were not aware of it then, in retrospect you should be. Off the top of the head, I can think of at least three. The fact is that what could have happened to you did not. When you were busted on the forgery rap, you do not know to whom I spoke and I knew about it months in advance of the time you were dragged off without breakfast. I did tell you I was with Tommy Baumler when he phoned you about it. I was on the second phone at Barbara's.

What I am saying is that you have no reason not to trust me and every reason to trust me. When you do not, I have to ask myself why. The closest thing you ever said that could explain this is quoting your shrink as saying you can't make meaningful relationships. Maybe he did. I do not think "can't". Maybe won't or fear to, but not that it is impossible. I never pursued this, although I did spend a night drinking with Dr. Head. His liquor, his smoked oysters, his home (in the second floor, rear, uptown side Napoleon, river side St. Charles, 11/68).

Communication is two ways, as I said before. I really do wish you the best.

Js, This is a letter to the N.O. informant I've called the strange chick. I mentioned her phone call after so long a silence some time back. To this day I do not know the source of her knowledge. She is sharp, very sharp. Also hungup on many things I've detected. I still have a capsule I took from her purse once, but I've never checked what it is. I suspect the NOPD narcs were keeping her supplied, and I know she was an informant for them. The sketch to which I refer is the one of "Vic". Suddenly she was living, without advance indication, with a cop named Vic in Braithwaite, La., maybe 40 miles toward the Gulf from N.O. I'm sure she had been on something for a while and have pictures of infected needle marks in one of her arms. There is nothing not true in my letter, but it is not the whole truth. I think of the probable reasons for her call to me the most likely is loneliness and her knowing she can trust me. Because I felt and feel this way and found her both stimulating and challenging, never being certain I had figured anything out, and because she did lead me to some great stuff, whether or not she had any understanding of it, I have had pangs of conscience at not having written her. When she called I said I would after a sign from her that she would not be just writing at me and after she gave me the names of the about ten people of whom that sketch reminded her. However, there is an odd relevance in one thing I do not mention that I had in mind had she not foreclosed any dialogue the last time I saw her, as quoted. I was staying at La Petit on Tulane last time I was there, As soon as I had a free minute, I phoned her and asked her to phone if she'd care to go out to dinner some night. She phoned better than daily, never once leaving a message, when I wasn't there. I do work in N.O.! When I got back the late afternoon of the last planned day, she was sitting in the lobby waiting for me. We went to a cheap steakhouse she selected on Airline, dined, and I took her home and went back to work in N.E.O. But with what I have told you of Hunt's and my paths crossing, there is relevance in one thing I avoid in this letter. She used to date Layton Martens occasionally, at least once, long before the Shaw trial, was out with him and Russo together, and Russo's version and hers coincided perfectly. I spoke to them separately. Martens is gay. Russo, who pretends to be a cocksman and a pornographer (film), never hinted at any physical interest in her. I guess it would be more accurate to say that Martens, who is also in Shaw's phone book, is both ways. His account to the police of Ferrie's diversions, which I did not get from Garrison, is like from a medical text, and he lived with Ferrie. He also lived with a gay shrink after Garrison, I think named Tom Rafferty. Anyway, after a date with Martens once, this chick told me she had a good joke on me. I had taken WHITEWASH to "one of our" publishers. I asked her the name. (She is very bad with exact names but always within reason.) She said she couldn't remember the name, but it began with a "P". Well, you know about Praeger. I was there. I was sent by a mutual friend to his director of special projects, then one Mort Puner. Mort read the ms overnight, said if it were up to him there would be a first printing of 25,000, ^{BUT HE THOUGHT} BUT, he thought Fred Praeger, then just returned (that is, the next a.m., when I learned he'd read the whole thing overnight) from San Francisco, would not go for it. Didn't, allegedly because I am not a reknowned scholar. Not until later did I know that Praeger printed CIA books. Among others, natch. BUT, with close to 26 to 1 odds against it, HOW did this chick come up with the ~~wick~~ right initial? When I asked her how she knew, she laughed and laughed, and said that Layton had told her and busted his sides laughing as he did. Now, as a kid, he was CRC, which was CIA. So, I also have a point. HW