

Route 8, Frederick, Md. 21701
2/19/73

Dear Mr. Scott,

Following are excerpts from Dione Turner's letter to me of 2/13, from "isolation". Her name is "Dione" but she says they have her listed as "Diane".

"I have not heard from my lawyer in a long time, not since before I wrote you last, which I don't understand at all. I sent him a letter explaining about my bodd troubles since but don't know if he even got it as I haven't received word from him. I only have the 8¢ envelope which you sent me and am using it to write you with as you can see... Could you send him a letter ~~from~~ from up there if I give you his address?

"Tell him this is a bad place to be in to put it mildly, especially for the inexperienced - me. That I got a check back and finally cashed & can at least post bond...I have a place to stay and a job...waiting for me here in Houston at Baylor Medical School and would rather pay him that way myself, but if he'd rather, I'll go ahead and get my sister to send him a check for whatever. Tell him I want to talk it over with him first though and will honor and trust his judgment and decisions totally. Tell him about my past medical trouble with my leg, that it got re-injured in here & I need to have it checked by the orthopaedic surgeons here in Houston who already have my medical records. Tell him I have been totally honest with him so far and always will be...Also tell him I'm Jewish, belong to several organizations which will advance me emergency loans but I don't know how to get in touch with them from here. Ask him why and if he'll refuse to handle my case any more, and to let me know by mail the reason and that I'll at least pay him for what he has already done for me. Tell him that I would want to know anything he has been able to find out about my case so far. Tell him I need to hear from him at least by mail. ...My Scott knows I can write. I retained him by mail & he came to see me the day he got it..."

At some point she seems to have gotten a thing about being Jewish. I don't know if she converted, which is not all that easy in the orthodox Jewish belief, but she does write Biblical Hebrew.

She appears to be suggesting that you have abandoned her or to feel that you do not want to handle her case. Obviously, I have no knowledge of this, as I have no independent way of knowing whether she is innocent or guilty of whatever charge is against her. But I am certain, from her medical history, that even decent conditions of incarceration, whether or not they obtain for her or in Houston, can be dangerous if not irreversibly hurtful. This is why I asked that you please check into this as soon as it is possible for you to do so.

If you do not want to handle her case, can you arrange for other counsel for her? If some of the things she has told me are true, perhaps the ACLU might interest itself.

Sorry to seem to burden you, but she is far away and in apparent need.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

2/18/73

Mr. Robert R. Scott
783 Main St., Suite 1026
Houston, Texas, 77002

Dear Mr. Scott,

Miss Dione Turner has written me from Houston County jail telling me that you represent her and asking that I write you. She says she can make bail. I will write you further as soon as I can, quoting her letter. I write in haste because of concern over her health and to tell you a bit about her as I knew her, in confidence, of course.

She was in a very serious accident she was lucky to survive. I have never seen such stitch-marks as are on her legs. On one they extend from the instep to the abdomen. She has had much surgery as a consequence of this accident and to my knowledge was, long after the surgery began, forced to have one leg, I think the left, in a cast. After I last saw her and prior to her going to Houston, she told me there were further complications. The accident was so severe skin had to be grafted onto her entire lower abdomen. She says she has been injured by lesbian inmates and is getting no treatment. As of the 13th she said she was being punished by confinement in isolation.

I am a writer. I have in recent years specialized in the JFK assassination. It is in this connection that I know her. She was a friend, when she was about 17, of a Warren Commission witness and thereafter of several young men who figured in the Garrison case, one as a witness the other as an accused.

To my knowledge she was a narcotics informant for the New Orleans police. When I learned this I checked it personally and found her in the office of the man then chief of that squad, not Chief of Police. This was in the summer of 1968. Later, when I had some information I thought might be of interest to the narcotics squad there, in November 1971, I took it to a member of that squad. He confirmed her relationship, indicated it had ended, and told me he had no reason to believe she was ever on narcotics. I personally checked with federal narcotics agents in New Orleans. They knew her but did not confirm that she was officially an informant. However, I was with her when she called them to give them information.

I would be less than honest if I did not tell you that she gave me some pretty wild stories. However, I also must say that what I checked out, farout as it seemed, was completely accurate.

She may have a record for forgery in New Orleans. Here, again by accident, I have some first-hand knowledge. Against my advice she had a lawyer named Tommy Baumler, a man much deformed in body and more so in mind. After she was arrested I was with him when he got the message from his secretary by phone and when he spoke to Dione. In both cases, with his permission, I was on an extension. This was in the home of a mutual friend, where he just happened to be when I got there. She had been the victim of another accident, when her motorbike had been hit by a Cadillac. Prior to this I had checked that out and found her story truthful. I may still have the police reports on it. There is little doubt in my mind that Baumler put her up to it. He knew her then to be not fully responsible and was, as a matter of fact, going to do something about that as a matter of law. (Thereafter she went to a psychiatrist named, as I recall, Rees.) On hearing this, I was

shocked. Tommy had already, earlier, told me he was going to file the papers to establish her limited responsibility. I do not recall the Louisiana designation for this condition. He had forgotten that I knew this until I reminded him after hearing those two phone calls. He was trying to inflate the claim and to use her for as an instrument, needlessly. When he realized that there was a chance he could be disbarred over this - and he knew the district attorney's office didn't like him and that I had friends there other than Garrison - he immediately offered to pay her the amount of the last offer in settlement by the insurance company and to ask them to drop the charges against her in return for the abandonment of the legitimate claim. The sum was in the neighborhood of \$600 as I now recall.

I wanted to talk to her not in Bauml's presence and to find out the attitude of the district attorney's office. William Alford, who has since resigned, had the case. When I asked him about it and told him Bauml was her attorney, Alford offered to drop the case. I felt I could say nothing without talking to her, but I suggested to Alford that if he did it be with the stipulation that she take psychiatric treatment if it was needed. He agreed. I then phoned her. By then she or her family had arranged for Milton Brener, a prominent New Orleans attorney, to represent her. Brener was an enemy of Garrison's from their days as assistant district attorneys and was then writing a book against Garrison. Because Brener had made wrong assumptions about the relationship between Garrison and me and because one of his more dubious clients, who had been indicted, had asked me to arrange for him to cop a plea behind Brener's back (something neither Garrison nor I would have anything to do with), I felt that I could not discuss this further with Dione. Instead, when I was about to leave New Orleans, I phoned her father and asked him to meet me so I could tell him the foregoing in more detail. His home, 320 Ridgeway Drive, Metairie, La., is but minutes from the New Orleans airport. As soon as I got confirmation of a flight that would give us a couple of hours for conversation, I phoned Mr. Turner. He declined, saying he had to go to mass. Had he not made it clear to me that he did not want to talk to me, I'd have changed my reservations if going to mass was more important to him than his daughter's welfare. However, I rather suspect that he also was under some misapprehensions about me and perhaps about my assumed relationship with Garrison.

If Dione is not the most dependable source, there is confirmation of her juvenile difficulties with her family. Whatever the cause of these difficulties, and I could believe that religion at least figured in them, I am not sitting in judgement. I merely tell you they are real and recorded in the files of the Jefferson Parish juvenile office. She had run away from home and she had helped a young boy who had also run away from his home. They ran away separately. She was 17 at the time, he 16. Her parents would probably say she was a difficult child, as I'd have no trouble believing she would have been with some parents.

My knowledge is not first-hand, but I believe her original surgery was at the Ochsner Hospital and that when her leg was in the cast she was going to Charity Hospital, should you want to check on her medical history and probable present situation. If there is any truth to her allegation of rough treatment from other prisoners or if there is only the possibility of it, from what I know of her medical history (not all from her, by the way) I am certain that the danger to her is clear and great and can be beyond repair and very painful. She seems concerned about your situation, because she has not paid you a retainer, and she is aware that whatever you do for her involves costs. She says that when she is out she'll be able to work and repay you. She is an X-ray technician. I do hope you can find time to see her at the jail soon and inquire into her situation and ask for medical attention if it seems needed. From what I know, I doubt any jail hospital can do anything for any orthopaedic problem that may have developed. (I remember seeing her only once in cold weather. She often wore shorts and shirt-sleeved blouses, so the stitching from the extensive work done on her was quite visible. Needle-marks were not.)

My apologies for this lengthy intrusion into your time. However, if she has a medical need, it can well be urgent. If there is anything you can properly tell me about her