

Dear Jim,

4/6/73

Having just finished writing Jimmy the letter I began several days ago the most recent of Bud's incredible egotrips is much in mind. So, in advance of your coming here day after tomorrow, I record some thoughts while they are in my mind. Because we share interest and liabilities, this is my preference but I do not insist. You do as you believe best.

How you can make Bud face realities I do not know, and as you know, for the most part I've just avoided it. He is the creature of preconceptions the irrationality of which he will not face, of an ambition that no matter how commendable is utterly beyond him, and of a jealousy that while galling him is one of the ways by which he is making what success he can hope for impossible.

If you heard some of his vaunting self-displays and those he has contrived to come from some of his nuts, as I have on tapes supplied me, you would wonder if on these matters he has any contact with reality. Flammonde is one of the more sickening fawners.

Like all of us, Bud does some things very well. Where he is good he is very good. But this does not satisfy him because he wants to be great where he is incompetent. The most distressing part is that he appears to be incapable of learning, about himself and about those incompetents he gathered together in his abortion.

He has gotten a considerable fame from the Ray case. But it is on the one hand in spite of himself and on the other entirely from the work you and I have done. He is not content with our willingness for him to reap the glory. He has to prove to himself that he is entitled to this glory he did much to deny himself.

This is worse than arrogance, worse than stupidity.

It is also worse than what it also is, an abuse of both of us. I have gotten nothing out of thousands of hours of work of which he is the beneficiary, work that can do me no good, unless something comes of Freed. The conditions of our lives all this time have been much worse than even you have any way of knowing. Bud, however, was living it up. He even stuck me for some of my expenses and with Jerry's phone calls had the gall when I reminded him of our initial deal to tell me he did not have the money!

I got him his client, gave him his case, then went out and did the necessary investigating for the habeas corpus and the only problem I had was Bud, as you know. What you got from cases I had arranged for years earlier and Bud actually refused to send me down to pick it up. You had to hurry and I would have found more than still existed by the time you had to hurry through this. You know of several things I did when he said he would not pay for them and how important they are.

Our initial agreement, with which he never abided, was all in his interest. My purpose was success and protecting him from the kinds of foolish things he does. Except for reserving my own work for myself, there was nothing selfish in the terms to which he agreed, if that is selfish and if giving so much of it to him is selfish. But instead he surrounded himself with stumblebums who would make a big thing of him, spent much money on them and accomplished nothing. The more he failed the more he came to dislike me, as he also did each time one of my cautions turned out to be right.

He has had as much to do with getting the case to where it is as King Tut. But in the papers he alone had anything at all to do with it. Even this fails to satisfy that sick ego. What I didn't do you did. With the money he pissed away taking Flammonde and himself to England God knows what I could have done! Then he lied to you and Bob about this, claiming the Flammonde's non-existing publisher paid the expenses. My suspicion is that he hoped Flammonde would write of him as he did of Garrison. Ugh!

Despite all of this I have been publicly silent and have been content for him to have what glory there is and credit he has done nothing at all to deserve.

As my letters to Jimmy will show, I have always believed that the time of any real hearing for him would be a dangerous time. It presents real dangers to those who were responsible for the crime, those to whom Jimmy can lead and to the authorities, including particularly the FBI.

Rightly or wrongly I have put two things together. This is the cause of my writing now. In the interests of all of us I dare not do otherwise. And if you want to give this letter to Bud, do it.

Several days ago you asked me if I know or have a picture of a guy of whom you gave me no description except size. And nothing else. This, of course, made me wonder, and the fields through which the mind could wander were few.

Then, yesterday, when I asked you if you had spoken to Bud, you said you saw him only briefly because Turner was there and you were busy.

What a remarkable coincidence it is that this man of whom Bud persists in thinking so highly despite an incredible record of thorough incompetence and in spite of the ruin for which he was so responsible in New Orleans, turns up of all times as just this state in the Ray case and immediately after your inquiry about a stranger!

Turner is so incompetent and so blind he could not find public ~~hair~~ hair in a whorehouse. His record is so undeviating that I often wonder if it is mere incompetence.

Of course, he could be on vacation, seeing Bud only socially, but I don't believe it. The "coincidence" is much too great.

Two possibilities immediately suggest themselves. There may be more but for me there is no need to think further. There is some new lead on the case and Bud is trying to freeze me out so he can feel he has done some glorious thing without me; or there is what I have been expecting for a long time and to come at this juncture, some kind of threat or warning or other indication of this sort. The time for it came with the sixth-circuit decision. You have heard my private conversations with James on this and have seen my letters, so you know that I have from the first expected that the closer we got the more dangerous it got.

Assuming either possibility to be possible, I will address both.

I have not done all the work I have on this, so often despite Bud, to let him bring some of his bums in to mess it up.

And if there is a threat of any kind, I'm certainly not going to tolerate either not knowing about it or letting anyone else, especially a loser like Turner, have anything to do with it.

If there is any kind of threat, aside from danger to Jimmy, there is most danger to you and to me and least to Bud and Bob.

Because you and I have done all the work and have all the knowledge, we do present a real threat. It is not possible for anyone to read only the habeas corpus and understand it and what it suggests without knowing how much you and I can know. Percy Foreman may confuse Bob and Bud but others have unconfused minds. (Bud told me about that funny one. He and I spoke briefly because I called to ask if I could do anything for him in Miami next week when I expected to be going there.)

I have had threats, some pretty professional. But none since the beginning, when I not only ignored them but commented on them at the time.

But even if there is danger to Bud and Bob, as there is if you and I are in danger of any kind, how can he may his family, which is vulnerable as he has perhaps not conceived, captive of his silly beliefs and childish ambitions?

Well, I will not permit it with my wife and you are less than a man if you do with your's. Particularly where and how I live. I am a mark.

I don't want to fight with Bud. As you know, I have done much to avoid it. There is enough in my mind to precipitate a showdown on this. I would prefer to avoid it. But if there is anything to my suspicions I can't let it rest either where it is or with the safety of any of us with Bud's self-concepts or ambitions.

Without the Turner thing and because of the expectations of the past triggered by your inquiry about that man, when I spoke to Bud yesterday I made a few broad hints. He paid no attention. Of course this can be because there is nothing to them. On the other hand, I believe it is inevitable that whether or not we know about it something has to be

crashing around in the forest about now.

(If you want another example of Bud's judgement in these matters, he actually suggested that we take some of my Watergate work to Baker! Baker of all people!)

Now I can't imagine your being in Houston with Bud and Bob and having occasion to ask me about a barely-described man without Bud having the same reason.

Well, if it is less than a description, it does fit several characters who are without exaggeration very dangerous, among the most dangerous. And they in turn fit two, not one, pattern in this case.

You will recognize that I am telling you nothing about who they are or what the connections can be. I am merely telling you that maybe there is a fit. If and when I think it serves your interest to know, I will tell you. The same is true of Bud, but there I will be more reluctant simply because he has a demonstrated capacity for repeating the same mistakes and irresponsibilities and this is one he might not survive. He can't control himself and his impulses and his follishes.

We are none of us equal to coping with these kinds of subhumans but of us all, I do believe I come closer, in part because I have knowledge none of the rest of you has. I think maybe there are other factors. But I am no James Bond and Bud certainly is no Perry Mason. This is no time for amateurs to be hamming around. This is a time for exploiting our seeming weaknesses and using the strength of our opposition as best we can against it. There are such possibilities.

An aside: Bud is going to have to learn that putting others in association with Ray is not going to solve the crime and that if it could the FBI would have had it solved long ago. I know when and where they picked up sufficient identification if they did not have it earlier, as I also presume they did. They offered Ray a deal only to get his testimony, and he rejected it not from dedication to the lofty spirit of omerta but because he could not deliver what they wanted of him. (He may also have been afraid to.)

Another aside: if Bud is working on something with Bob he should have a measure of Bob's competence and willingness in these kinds of matters. I took him by the hand and took him to two important witnesses and existing records and all he had to do was go back and pick up the cookies and even that simple thing he did not do. If he is incapable of seeing and doing things like this, would you want your life to depend on his performance? Does Bud?

Sh, I have hated to take this time. After all the things I detest in what has happened and never should have in any kind of honorable relationships between colleagues if not friends, I detest even more the mere suspicion that one is toying with my life and arrogates to himself for whatever reason the right to do it.

The time is going to have to come when my time is not wasted this way. I try to do too much that others are not doing and there is no time and no support. I should now be preparing for what can be a very important visitor and I haven't even gotten into decent clothing.

Meanwhile, let me make what I intend to be taken as a very serious threat: if anything like this is afoot and Bud is keeping it secret from me, even if it is no more than the barest suspicion, he has never seen or dreamed of anything like what he had better be prepared to face. And he had better be prepared for me to go public on it, too, for if it is necessary I surely will. I simply will not let his sick concept of himself have anything to do with whether or not I can be hurt or killed.

I have no trouble choosing between survival and glory. Left to himself Bud will not even have the option.

And if I find out that something like this has happened and he is not letting me know, if nothing happens to any of us he will never forget it anyway.

He owes many obligations and the least of them is to his crazy ambition. Another is to Bill and his family. If he has not told Bill, that is awful. And if there has been anything like this, whether or not it is a legitimate charge, he may be subject to charges being laid on him from his silence alone.

I am sure something is up. I leave it at this point in your hands, at least until I return. When I do we had better have an uninterrupted, long and careful conference in which there are no secrets and no Turners. Sincerely,

This postscript two days later is not what I got up for before 4 a.m. and on my birthday yet. However, this insanity of Bud's lingers in my mind.

It is not from fear for myself nor for the moment for any of us. That will come from Turner's bumbling. If he doesn't in this instance, I guess there is always a first and this would be his. It really is that bad. Not fear will come. Danger. If those responsible for the job are sane they'll do nothing. Except to protect themselves. By now they know what to expect of Jimmy. The hazard he presents does not now exist for them. In fact, it doesn't exist at all because he saw nothing. Association in itself proves nothing. Here is where the government also has been stupid because instead of offering a deal it should have offered collaboration. It has the protection of the prosecution being by the state.

This troubles me because it represents what has been so detrimental to my work in the past, including but not limited to the time this kind of thing has required in the past. Besides Garrison, you know the time I spent on the Wecht self-seeking and such raving maniacs as Sprague and Skolnick.

But if Bud really had the intention of either "solving" the case or protecting himself and his client, he has done exactly the opposite from the first, beginning with Flammonds, of whom he could expect only sycophancy, and through the Hoffa meeting. He not only should have had me there (I'd have recommended against an English vacation), there was an entirely different pitch to be made to Hoffa, one I made to Buffalino in 1966.

However, there remains the question what to do. If those nuts are really going around on this it will have to be stopped. Aside from our obligations to ourselves there is an obligation to Jimmy, whose wishes in this matter are more than merely known to Bud. And this represents the one way that I can stop Bud's craziness. He does not know me if he thinks I won't do it, either.

You will remember that the last time I wrote you in this vein, after he was here the last time, I said things would have to change. I did not mean this way, of course. I take it that you found it impossible to discuss this with Bud. If you don't do it this time I will. There is no choice. There is no way to prevent any of us from being assassinated and there is no reason to expect those willing to off King to be afraid of us of the consequences of killing us. Moreover, there is no reason to believe that those responsible for the King job give a damn if what would happen to us would attract attention to the JFK case. They have nothing to lose that way. This craziness also destroys that defense.

The problem is how do you reason with the insane.

The only way I have ever found effective is to make their position impossible. This is the only way I could ever handle Garrison and Salandria.

If you decide to make a try, and if you decide to give Bud the previous pages, don't give him this one because the crazy figure they are the only rational ones and while I have no reluctance in giving him offense where it is necessary, I don't want to do it needlessly.

However, he had better understand that unless there is an immediate end to this consummate stupidity I will tell Jimmy and he will be fired. I have saved him for the last time unless he starts being an honorable man. Aside from everything else, as I last wrote, I expect henceforth that he will adhere to our original agreement. If he henceforth does not, I'll get him fired. This is not selfishness. It is need.

The only chance we had of accomplishing his extra end was through me seeing Jimmy often. The last time he almost started telling me what he can tell. And he as much as promised to. What you got later you got from my pressures on him by remote. The same could have been true through seeing John, who knows what he has not said and said he knows it.

I don't know how the case would be defended without Bud but that now is the least of our problems. If Jimmy finds out about this, we won't have the problem anyway. But if I tell him he'll stick with you and me. You and I can find a way and if the defense is reduced to us, we can handle it. Nobody would do worse legally than Bud has anyway.

The timing is particularly bad and particularly for me, which makes the mysterious appearance even more interesting. Provocative. It can be timed to Bob's remark but it coincides with other things, too. We have to worry about the realities of the crime but no less about what can appear to be and be wrong. And some of Jimmy's stuff is bum steers.