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1/5/80

Dear Buddy,

That you have not heard from me since your visit three weeks ago does not mean that we did not welcome and appreciate it and the opportunity it provided for your getting a notion of what the archive contains and will contain. It has been a rather intense period, one in which there were two days of depositions, two of court calendar calls and a period in which I had to prepare and provide four affidavits in two different cases. Right now I'm working on still another.

During the depositions we learned of other and quite valuable records that have been withheld in the King case. The problem in getting them is the ever-present one, of immunity for false-swearing and lie-telling officials, who can and do get away with almost any abuse in court.

We learned what even the appeals officer did not know, although we learned it from his former assistant assigned to this case, that the FBI has what it calls abstracts of all records at FELEQ, including those from the field offices. Aside from filing data these duplicated records hold a brief synopsis of each record. There are two sets, one by date and the other by filing number, sequentially. No matter how inadequate each synopsis may be, the combination of them and the guide to the vast file, by date and by number, has to be quite valuable. We are already in a big fight to get it, a fight in which the initial misrepresentations to the judge have had partial success. I'm going to ask Dave to provide an affidavit attesting to the value and importance of such records to scholarship and as a means of access to the records abstracted.

These many and difficult and time-consuming legal fights have their own separate importances, as I think Dave can explain with less partiality than a combatant. He gets two copies of them, my original carbon on which I look for last-minute errors and typos, and a xerox of what is filed with the Court.

The time pressures were such that Lil was retyping the affidavits while I was still drafting them and I could not use the mail. Jim Lesar came up for one, I sent one by a neighbor who was going to near Jim's home, one by a neighbor's son and one by a friend who lives in suburban Washington. Lil was still typing that one when he and his wife arrived!

I believe that historians and political scientists will find importances in these affidavits.

I'm also glad you had a chance to meet Rae, who is one of the bright^{est} and best people we have ever met. She would be important to us under any circumstances but with our increasing ages and medical problems and the handicaps they mean she is even more important. I would encourage you to keep her in mind for the future.

She is this able and this good: yesterday, before she left for the ~~first~~ first time, she located and helped Lil make copies of a series of records scattered among close to 5000 ~~thousand~~ of them for me to use as attachments to the current affidavit relating to the abstracts. Being able to do this, with no omissions, required more than her knowl^{ed}ge of the filings.

When she left that time, in her unsafe and almost rusted-out Vega, despite warning it up first it missed as she was going up the short, steep hill you may remember. She skidded into a ditch that is deep enough to turn the car almost over. She could not get out of the driver's side door but she managed to force ~~open~~ ^{open} the other door that never works and to walk back here, falling only twice. That was the beginning of a predicted ^{glazed} 10 inches of snow, then ~~glazed~~ because the sanding trucks had not reached it. She was shaken up but not hurt. I was able to get the police to come and mark the spot with flares because by then it was dark and to get a tow-trucker whose owner knows me to come and take her ^{to} where she lives and her car to her garage. Our driveway was so slick she said that if I need help this morning to please call her because she is strong, can shovel and can walk here - through a predicted 10" and on such steep hills.

While we can't compel her Lil and I talked it over after she left with the tow truck and ~~decided~~ decided that once again we have to dip into our slim reserve against

the kinds of emergencies we can face and then persuade her to ~~accept~~ ^{accept} help in improving her transportation. We then got in touch with Jerry McKnight's stepson, who had no interest in college but much in mechanics and works for a suburban garage of good reputation, to solicit his aid in getting a reasonably safe and not overly expensive used car for her. In a couple of weeks he can probably come up with one we may be able to swing.

Aside: his family needed a second car and his company picks up wholesaled cars. The mechanics get first crack at them. When his turn came he got a 1970 Cadillac. The gas problem I anticipated floored me but he explained that on the road, which is where he uses it, going to and from work, about 30 miles round trip, he gets 18 mpg. And his fancy job even has perfect leather upholstery, as befits the former Pentagon bigshots who were chauffeured around in it. All he is doing to it is repainting it to the original black.

Lil is up and I now must brave the wintry blasts and see if I can clear our lane with the snow blower before the predicted 30 mile winds and second predicted snow hits us.

I hope the time comes when we can sit down for a longer period and explore the potential of what can be added to what you have seen and what I indicated I expect to get. I've already taken the initial steps toward getting very much more.

Our best,

Harold Weisberg