Dear Dick (cc Gary),

John phoned me from Washington about two hours ago. I was quite upset during the conversation, but a new real more tranquil than I had expected. It was an incredible call. The conversation that were my nerves in better shape, would have been difficult.

He pretends not to have gotten my next-to-last letter, the one I just sent with a copy of his to Dick for copying for Gary. I will not try and go over the whole thing. He pretends that what he saw in my work he didn't see there except the picture, which he now says he would have gotten anyway, because he would sooner or later have asked for exactly what I showed him (he acknowledges it blew his mind, that) and claims that in the course of time he'd have asked for the autopsy authorization again and gotten it. In pretending he had not gotten this letter, naturally, he was pretending to be unaware of what he had early written me, in part quoted back to him.

Dick, who has had this happen to him, will not be surprised to know that John has duplicated my work with the bullet and copyrighted it in his name!

This should be enough to give you a good idea of what he is up to. Now, having declined collaboration with Dick and me when we offered it, as he refused to associate me with his suit and instead is trying to steal my stuff for it, he is actually offering my material to Look in his own name! For pay!

While my chief concern is that he will ruin what I have been building, I also will not tolerate this. What he does not know is that I once offered this to Look and got turned down. But if they buy from him, I think they'll be hooked for a suit, for I have no doubt I have their refusal in writing, whether or not it specified this material. More, I offered him to Cowles Publishing, which also rejected, and whether or not the Burkle stuff is in that text or appendix I do not now remember, the bullet business is there.

By accident, he got the Burkle approval of the Husse burning. And it is always possible he does not remember my showing it to him (and more, which makes me believe he did forget it), as you know, I wrote him about this at some length. He pretends ignorance of it. He must have gotten that letter by today. He said at a little before six that he had just gotten in. This I really worry about, as Gary knows better than Dick, and I certainly do not want his ego-indulgence to tip off those who do not realize what I have done, in addition to everything else, close the door I've opened. How to make that bulky ego understand this is the real problem and then, of course, understand, to get him to behave both honorably and responsibly. However, if nothing else, we can make a record. It happens that very long ago you saw this part of my work. I'd like you both to write him telling him that I have asked you to tell him this alone: that I forced out and used in my autopsy writing the Burkle approval of the burning. I fear that tomorrow he'll blunder into the rest and ruin that else. But this much, he has and thinks he has discovered America. If you remember, as I would think you do, and would tell him, giving the approximate times (with Gary a year and a half ago, with Dick almost a year), then he'll have a little to trouble himself with, for he now claims I didn't show it to him. I have kept that stuff in a separate file until recently, and you both may recall this or may not.
I told him the whole story of what the Archives did with my picture of 399 on his word that he'd not use it and, believe it or not, he immediately started telling me what he'd do with it! I gave it to him, then and there, asking him how anyone could ever trust him or his ego if he couldn't remember a promise while we were still discussing it. But his ego is such he does not realize what this does to him. He so faithfully copied what I had done and showed him that the Archives thinks they can get away with saying it is the one I have, the one they did for me! The letters they wrote Dick and me, and John's own acknowledgement, will ruin him forever in court, and if he doesn't back off and believe, I have every intention of doing just that.

Now that it is over, I do wish I'd taped the conversation. He asked about getting together tomorrow and I gave him my schedule. I told him when I'll be at the medical center, when I should be able to be at Bud's (orienting this with his hotel, which is about a block from Buda's), told him about when I'd get to Bud's, how long I could stay there before having to leave for the Archives, when my appointment was, how long it should take, approximately when I'd get back to Bud's, and offered to drive him to Netherland in plenty of time for his speech. Now much more can one do for an ego-created crook? And I will come as close to keeping this schedule as I can.

I get nervous when I look at this stuff now, so - I'm not doing any checking. However, to be sure of one thing, I did check my LOOK file, and I did offer LOOK my autograph work too and Dec 1962. I submitted the earlier part of it 9/66. They lost it for a while and I have the letters of apology. I do not know what the law is, but I do believe that understanding what the p.r. is, and this will be the end of John's professional reputation, if not enough to itself to establish that LOOK should have known better. I believe it was in the summer of 1968 that a friend introduced it to Cowles, and if I didn't include the does, I did love and offer them. I'm reasonably certain the files will reflect this clearly.

But here the Archives crookedness a joy to me. Imagine their saying that the electrostatic copy of my picture (if it's not yet have John's, for they haven't filled my order and Dick hasn't sent me a copy) enables them to identify it as the one he directed them to take.

But the real problem is not to collect from LOOK, gratifying as that would be, or to hurt John, richly as he deserves it. The real problem is to keep him from believing what he has been saying, and here is where I can use help, for when was I told him tonight sinks in and when he reads what is in the mail to him his ego will go crazy. There are many other ways I can establish that this was him in the work he saw. Bud saw the same stuff. I would not use Vince, but he did. I would know it and I would invoke him. I have submitted it to Playboy, to others. All the same file that he kept together. I had it down to the nubile tech stage, though still intact. Bud took me to the Readers' Digest with it. He brought a man from the Manchester Union-Leader up and he saw it. I don't now think the immediate problem or concern is legal. I think it is to keep that bull ego from wrecking this delicate china shop.

This is pretty sticky, so if you do not wish to do anything, I'll have no hard feelings. - Here it also, notice the intrusion it is in constructive work. But I simply must keep him from wrecking what is so far succeeding in doing. Dick, I've not sent you the best for a number of reasons, chiefly cost and security, but Gary has a duplicate and Howard will see it tomorrow, and others have, including Bud, who says it is the most significant thing we have. Here, getting it, I am concerned about the closing of the door. It is better not to go to court for what can be obtained otherwise.
I asked Joan tonight as I wrote him why cannot he content himself with
suing for his own work, why can he not leave my own work for my suit. He
was without response. I reminded him of my repeated and unanswered requests that he
include me in his suit when he had no lawyer, and he again had no response. I rem-
inded him that Dick and I offered collaboration in the LOOK article, and he again
had no response. To me, this leaves no doubt about his intentions.

And, if he uses any of this, it will wreck his suit. I think it may
not be necessary for me to do it, for I think it will be spontaneous, once the
government tumbles to the picture bit that only a few now knew about. Wait until
that gets to the government lawyers, and his copyrighting of mine!

If we do not meet tomorrow it will be because he as arranges it. My
schedule was arranged in advance, for I had to make an archives site specific,
as the letters you have shown, and I had to see Bud before that, and to take
respectable specimens to the lab before all of it, and am returning to Bud's to pick
up Howard. If John is there then, perhaps he'll listen to Howard, if he can listen
to anyone, for Howard also said it, with this nasogastric fixings, and his time fixed,
for he said he expects to spend only about 10-15 minutes with you, all he has to
do is be at Bud's when I told him I'll be there or leave work for me to pick him up
at his hotel. If we do not meet, I think I'll have another clear reading of at least
his subconscious, for he has nothing to do until his speech.

Earlier today I solicited your opinions about the LOOK general course I
propose to follow. I do need them, for I have an emotional involvement, a personal
feeling, you do not. Gary, who has a technical fund of what anxiety is and means
may better understand that part which is personal, detached from the work, and I tell
you quite openly I think if there were no great jeering to the work I'd feel much
the same way for these personal reasons. At some point we must discipline ourselves,
or perhaps cleanse ourselves. This is a third point, this endless thingery must stop.
There is ample for all who will do the necessary work. Bud can tell you that when he
and I were at the archives together and one of the files had a slip about it with
lifton's name, I asked him not to let me see the pages involved and then I declined
to examine that file at all. I think this is the only course, I try to practice it.
I have more than a million words that I think are pretty clear, I'm only going to use
the fact that on few occasions I used that of others, I do credit it on them
only after I have permission. I think Gary has seen files where I offered to credit
others for what I had discovered and carelessly omitted from my own work when a third
person called the oversight to my attention. I claim not meanminded but sincere effort,
and I think we have come to the point where we can survive nothing else. I'll best
stop. I hope this is sufficiently lucid and not as much worse than my usual typing
as it can be for the condition my nerves were in earlier. By the way, he said his LOOK
manuscript is 17 pages. And that he has "abused" them presumably by delays.

Unless there is a reasonable word from him within a reasonable time, not
until after both of you have time to counsel, I shall write him and tell him I
intend writing LOOK in full and warn them of my intentions to sue. I have already
told him that if he goes ahead I will... meanwhile, Bud just returned my call. He
doubts we'll see Jean tomorrow, told him it looks impossible (without having read
what I had sent him, which gives you Bud's independent opinion) says we also doubts
LOOK will use it, which I do not agree with, says he thinks the flaws in Jean's
suit are fatal and that it has already fallen apart. Which may, operates, make sense
to you of the great time I spent trying to help him when I should have been doing
other work... Isn't it awful, spending time this way, facing this kind of problem?