

S T A T E M E N T

-of-

LOUIS J. LEISMAN

APPEARANCES:

HON. MYLES J. LANE
United States Attorney, S.D.N.Y.

CHESTER T. LANE, ESQ.
Attorney for ALGER HISS

STANLEY D. ROBINSON, ESQ.
Assistant United States Attorney

March 31, 1952

Catherine T. Dwane
Steno.

By Chester Lane

May I say for the record, or otherwise -

By M. J. Lane

Make it for the record.

By Chester Lane

That I am not here as Mr. Leisman's attorney and that he is not here at my request. He telephoned me on Friday and said that he wished to make a protest to the appropriate authorities and said he intended to see the United States Attorney in Baltimore and I told him that the United States Attorney in New York is in charge of this case and that I thought that that was where he should make a protest if he wanted to and that I would try to arrange a meeting.

By M. J. Lane

Q. Mr. Leisman - did you bring with you an affidavit?

A. Yes, sir, I did.

By M. J. Lane

May the record indicate that I received an affidavit from Mr. Leisman and may I take time out now to read it.

Q. Who prepared this affidavit?

A. The girl in Mr. Chester Lane's office. I asked her to word it. It is not like a lawyer would say it, but I asked her to use my own words like I would say it, and if you want me to explain anything, I will do that for you.

74-1333-5199

LOUIS J. LEISMAN

3/31/52

NJL:cd

By Chester Lane

You don't mean that she wrote it.

By Mr. Leisman

She took it down as I gave it to her. I want some relief so that my child can continue his schooling. I got 10 more weeks for him to go and I want a letter to Major Burg so that I can get it out there quickly and stop them from thinking that the FBI is looking for me. What I want is a letter or something to convince these people of just what the FBI is doing - and I don't know what they are doing, of course, I can't interfere with the whole FBI, but it seems to me that these two fellows are interfering with me.

By M. J. Lane

Q. What are they doing wrong?

A. Legally nothing wrong, only to go around to different people and say they are looking for me, if they are looking for me I am there.

Q. They are checking the story that you gave them.

A. A month and a half seems to be a long time to be doing that, don't you think so.

Q. Do you suggest that they should not be permitted an opportunity to check your story?

A. I didn't give them any story, only the affidavit that I made with Mr. Lane here.

Q. The affidavit which you gave to Mr. Chester Lane was in turn presented to the Court and a copy of it was given to me. Now naturally it is my duty as the U.S.A. I can't take that affidavit on its face value - I have to check the affidavit and see whether what you say is true or false, and the only way I can do that is by using the FBI to do it.

A. It all centers around Utah Place and not a word about Aberdeen.

Q. I can't tell the FBI how to conduct their investigation, that is something which they have control over.

A. I think you are the man responsible for the case.

Q. Any more you can tell me?

A. I don't want them to bother my wife and child.

Q. In what way do they bother them?

A. Her job - she has been working for a man for 7 years and he refuses to take her back because on 3 different occasions the FBI have been in and out of the place.

Kisseloff-24594

- Q. The FBI didn't charge your wife with any crime - -
- A. The circumstances of the case - the man is a foreigner, he has only been in the country 10 years and he thinks that by questioning my wife that the FBI is after her, which is ridiculous, but that is what he thinks.
- Q. I can't control his thinking.
- A. When I first made this affidavit at the outset I asked that my wife not be drawn into the case. As it stands now my wife was not at the Utah Place and she wants to make an affidavit if that strengthens your case.
- Q. I don't know whether it weakens or strengthens my case. I don't care, all we want is the truth.
- A. You have the truth in my affidavit. You can have as many affidavits as you want in behalf of Mr. Hiss. I don't know Mr. Hiss and all I know is what the affidavit says, I never saw Mr. Hiss in my life.
- Q. Did you have some trouble with Mrs. Bird with respect to the amount of money you were to pay for board and room for your son?
- A. No, sir.
- Q. For yourself?
- A. No, sir.
- Q. What is your son's name?
- A. Jack Charles Leisman.
- Q. What agreement did you have with the Burgs with respect to boarding and rooming your son?
- A. \$12 a week we agreed to pay.
- Q. That was agreed to?
- A. Yes, sir.
- Q. How many weeks has the boy lived there?
- A. Since the 16th of February.
- Q. That would be about 6 weeks, wouldn't it?
- A. I don't know exactly.
- Q. How much have you paid the Burgs in that time?
- A. She pays it.
- Q. Who pays it?
- A. My wife.

Kisseloff-24595

LOUIS J. LEISMAN

3/31/52

MJL:cd

- Q. Are you sure she pays them \$12 a week?
- A. Yes sir.
- Q. Are you sure she pays each week?
- A. I am sure she made two payments, I was with her at the post office in Baltimore when she got the money orders.
- Q. What about the other 4?
- A. I don't know - but she pays?
- Q. Would you be surprised if I told you the money hadn't been paid?
- A. It hasn't been paid?
- Q. Would you be surprised?
- A. I sure would be surprised.
- Q. Well, then you had better check on that. That may be the seat of all your trouble.
- A. I will, Mr. Lane, but I have that much confidence with my wife to know she wouldn't owe it for 4 weeks. She pays.
- Q. Did you have any trouble with Sergeant Burg yourself?
- A. No, sir.
- Q. Did you have any quarrel with him?
- A. No, sir.
- Q. Are you sure?
- A. I wouldn't have any reason to quarrel with him.
- Q. Never had any harsh words with him?
- A. No, sir.
- Q. Any difference of opinion?
- A. No, I don't think anyone would have a quarrel with him, because he is such a nice fellow.
- Q. As I read this affidavit you haven't accused the FBI specifically of anything that would indicate that they have hurt you in any way, or suggested that they hurt you in any way.
- A. Well, I don't think anyone would be hurt like a child. I don't know where I am going to move him to.

Kisseloff-24596

LOUIS J. LEISMAN

3/31/52

MJL:cd

- Q. You still don't tell me anything specific that the FBI do to injure your child, or your wife, what have they gone out and done and said?
- A. The only thing is as I said in the affidavit.
- Q. The affidavit doesn't say anything you have arrived at, but some suppositions.
- A. I said that -
- Q. Can you give me any facts?
- A. No I can't give you any facts.

By Mr. M. J. Lane

Do you have any questions, Mr. Robinson -

By Mr. Robinson

No, I would note that in the concluding paragraph of the affidavit - "This procedure is going away beyond seeking information and I would term it nothing but plain persecution" - I would ask Mr. Leisman what are the facts underlying that assertion.

By Mr. Leisman

The facts would be that it seems to me that in a town that small it wouldn't take up the time of 2 FBI for 1 month and a half and I move out of the town with my wife, as the affidavit stated, and then instead of leaving the child alone they work on the child and my wife.

By Mr. M. J. Lane

- Q. Who do you know that they talked to?
- A. The affidavit states that I saw them at the provost office and they were told to get out.
- Q. Did Sergeant Burg tell you that?
- A. His wife told my wife that they had been there in the Provost office and that Burg ordered the FBI out of the grounds and that's what my wife told me, she went up there especially to see.
- Q. But Burg himself never told you, that's what your wife said?
- A. Yes.
- Q. But you never saw it and you weren't present when Burg said this?
- A. No, sir.

Kisseloff-24597

LOUIS J. LEISMAN

3/31/52

MJL:cd

- Q. So this is based upon hearsay?
- A. Well, if you want to take it from a legal standpoint that's all it is.
- Q. Do you know that the FBI was in Aberdeen making inquiries every day?
- A. I didn't intend to state every day, but nevertheless they have been there off and on.
- Q. Who are the complaints from?
- A. The Burge - the boy was there, they were satisfied to take him, they took him into their home and they were calling up my wife and telling her about what the real trouble was about it.
- Q. Who were the complaints from?
- A. The complaints came from Mr. and Mrs. Burg and they can't keep the child any longer.
- Q. Your wife told you that, they didn't tell you that?
- A. That's right.
- Q. They didn't tell you that the reason they wanted you to take your child back was because you or your wife hadn't paid?
- A. I don't know for sure, but I would think that - I have enough confidence in my wife to say they got the money and she should have receipts for it.
- Q. Well you can still get them and send me the receipts or copies of them if you wish. Will you do that?
- A. I will be more than glad to if I can get any help, that's all I want.
- Q. It looks as though this man Marvelous, according to what you say here let your wife go from the place where she was working?
- A. That's right.
- Q. Did she tell you that?
- A. No, I was there when he said that, that was the night of the 1st of March.
- Q. Why did he say that he was letting her go?
- A. He said he had somebody coming down from New York, he said the FBI had been there 3 times and asked him questions, called him out of bed at 10 o'clock in the morning when he had only gotten to bed at 4 and he said I can't have your wife here.

Kisseloff-24598

LOUIS J. LEISMAN

3/31/52

MJL:ed

- Q. Did he tell you what the FBI was checking?
- A. No.
- Q. Why wouldn't he tell you?
- A. They don't talk, those Greeks, I don't know why, the reason he gave was that the FBI had questioned him and he can't have you here and the FBI coming many times.
- Q. How many times?
- A. 3 times.
- Q. In what space of time?
- A. He didn't specify. If they had only let the boy alone after we moved.
- Q. What do you mean leave him alone?
- A. In an indirect way it would harm the boy if the parents get talking and the children heard that the FBI is looking for the parents, especially in high school.
- Q. Why didn't you take the boy with you when you moved?
- A. Because I didn't want to take him out of high school. It costs me \$10.50 a week but it looks like now I will have to.
- Q. Why doesn't he go to school in Baltimore?
- A. Take him out 10 weeks before school closes?
- Q. I am asking you the question?
- A. No I don't want to take him out - I thought you were suggesting it.
- Q. Where do you live in Aberdeen?
- A. I live at 510 South Philadelphia Road, Mrs. Richard Lane. It is an apartment on the second floor on the south side.
- Q. How much do you pay for rent?
- A. \$12 a week.
- Q. For how many rooms.
- A. 3 rooms.
- Q. \$12 a week for 3 rooms, how long did you pay that?
- A. The last time I lived there about 7 months.
- Q. The last time, what do you mean the last time, did you live there before?
- A. Yes, I had the boy there for a whole year before and she won't take him back.

CONTINUATION OF STATEMENT

of

LOUIS J. LEISMAN

Same appearances.

Stone: A. Urban
(Relieved C. Dwane)
Date: March 31, 1952.

BY MR. LANE:

Q If you check and see if you paid the boy's board and room, your difficulties with respect to the board will be resolved. As far as I know, the FBI has not questioned your boy. I don't see how they would interfere with him at all. What I want to know, and if you can give me specific instances when the FBI violated any of your rights, I will take it up with the FBI because they are not instructed to interfere with any of your rights and, to my knowledge, they never have. But, if you can give me specific instances when they have, based on fact not hearsay, I will take it up with the proper authorities.

A Now, she can't get a job. That's facts. She can't go back to the Mayflower. Suppose they go into the Flying Clipper in Aberdeen where she is working now and she loses her job on account of the FBI, is that a fact?

Q What fact? The FBI certainly have a right to interrogate her.

A They never go near her or me. It is always the employer or the landlady or somebody like that.

Q I don't see why the employer or landlady should take offense.

A I agree, too, I don't see why.

Q We have a right, as officers of the Government, to check with people and I don't think the purpose or intent of the FBI is to, in any way, intimidate you or to try to influence anybody to injure you in any way or your wife or your child. If I thought for one moment that was their purpose or they were attempting to do that, I personally would see that it was stopped and the person reprimanded but you have not shown me anything.

A I can't convince these people up there. That is one thing I can't do.

BY MR. ROBINSON:

Q You agree they are acting irrationally?

A I agree they are in - I think, when they go and investigators and ask questions, I think they should go out and say "Don't put the boy out."

Q You agree these people are acting irrationally?

A Which people?

Q The people who refuse to give your wife back her job and take -

A I say this, 9 out of 10 people, I don't know whether you people know or not, whether honest or hardworking, as soon as you mention the FBI, they get scared, they think something is wrong.

BY MR. LANE:

Q Why is that? You wouldn't get scared if they mentioned the FBI. Neither would I.

A It is a very peculiar thing.

BY MR. CHESTER LANE:

A He was a sergeant in the Army and doesn't scare so easy. I don't scare so easy. They can follow me 24 hours a day but let them leave the wife and boy alone.

BY MR. LANE:

Q They have more important things to do than follow you 24 hours a day.

A I am just using that as a supposition. I would rather have them annoy me 24 hours a day.

Q The fact they question you -

A They don't question me. Everybody else but me.

Q But they question people in places where you were supposed to have been; things you said in your affidavit; I assume they want to check on these.

A There is nothing in that affidavit concerning Aberdeen.

Q But we can't tell the FBI what to do. There may be things in that affidavit which may require them to ask questions in Aberdeen. I would be the last one to tell them their business.

A I don't expect that. The only thing I am after, I just want them to let my wife and child alone.

Q I can't see from what you tell me -

A You are the last straw. I figured I could get some help from you.

Q If you demonstrated to me the FBI has done anything unethical or illegal, I could take some action but, from what I see thus far, I cannot agree the FBI has done anything unethical or illegal.

BY MR. CHESTER LANE:

Can I try to interpret what Mr. Leisman is asking here. Part of it relates to this. The FBI may be in some way improperly acting. Apart from that, he made the point when he started and now, his real problem is people are immediately suspicious and worried and I think I heard him ask you whether there wasn't some possibility of getting some kind of letter or what that could quiet the suspicions these people are developing, because the FBI are asking questions, there must be something wrong.

- Q I can't do that. You appreciate, if these affidavits Mr. Leisman has already submitted, if they are falacious or perjurous, any statement I made may be wrong. If they are perjurous, there may be action taken against it. In fact, I would practically be giving him immunity if he committed a -
- A I am asking for the wife or child. They are not involved in this whatsoever.
- Q I don't see that any further purpose can be served by this unless you have something to say on the record.
- A The FBI work in a way you can't do anything about it and still, I don't know, you say it isn't unethical. It certainly in my opinion is not ethical.
- Q Will you do this for me. Will you agree to check with your wife and find out -
- A I will do that, I promise.
- Q If these board and room payments have been made and -
- A I will send you the receipts.
- Q The dates when board and room payments have been made to Mr. Burg. I want to find out if Mr. Burg or someone else is not telling the truth. If you or your wife or Mr. Burg. That's fair enough.
- A Absolutely. If that's all you want me, I certainly can get it. If she didn't pay, that's the first person.
- Q I am not saying she didn't, but I want you to check.
- A I know my wife and I will bet you 10 to 1 she paid them people.
- Q I am not a gambler. I think that's all, Mr. Lane.

74-1333-5199