

JTH:J

RECORDED & INDEXED

May 9, 1925.

67-118-34
BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

MAY 9 1925 A.M.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Mr. J. M. Keith,
P. O. Box 467,
Phoenix, Arizona.

Dear Sir:

I am writing this communication to you as a strictly personal and confidential communication in that I want to bring to your personal attention certain conditions existing in the Bureau in the past and which I do not intend shall continue in the future. The writing of this letter to you relative to the matters I am going to discuss does not mean that I am inclined to the view that such conditions necessarily exist in your office, but I am taking the occasion to call to the personal attention of each Agent in Charge certain conditions which have not worked for the best interests of the Bureau and which I am determined shall be corrected.

I have through the Inspectors of the Bureau, endeavored to bring to the attention of the field offices the fact that I am strongly opposed to any employee of this Bureau indulging in the use of intoxicants to any degree or extent. I have indicated that any employees whom I find violating the rule of the Bureau relative to the use of liquor will be disciplined severely. I do know that some years past the forces of the Bureau of Investigation did not enjoy the best reputation, insofar as the element of sobriety was concerned, and in various sections of the country Agents of this Bureau were frequently referred to in disparaging terms because of their lack of soberness. I have been endeavoring to raise the tone of the Bureau of Investigation during the past year and I am strongly of the opinion that the only way whereby we can again gain public respect and support is through proper conduct upon our part. I have caused the removal from the service of a considerable number of employees who have not been able to attain the standard of efficiency which has been set. Some have been lacking in educational qualifications and others have been lacking in moral stamina. I do believe that there has been a certain amount of improvement in the general personnel of the Bureau but a situation recently developed which brings to my mind very sharply the fact that there is still room for improvement.

Recently I received information relative to conditions existing in one of the field offices of this Bureau wherein employees of that office were indulging in the use of intoxicants. To be sure, this intoxication did not occur in the Bureau office but it occurred after office hours at the home

105
3

of an Agent, and the Agent in Charge was present. On this occasion some of the employees of the Bureau reached various degrees of intoxication. I could not at first believe that such a condition could exist in view of the repeated statements which I had made relative to these matters, and it was very difficult to believe that an Agent in Charge would be so indifferent to the responsibilities of his office as to countenance such conduct. I at once directed an Inspector of the Bureau to investigate the situation and he corroborated in detail the information which had been given to me. I have accordingly, dismissed the Agent in Charge and the other employees guilty of this misconduct.

Now I, of course, appreciate the fact that the removal of these employees does not mean that all use of intoxicants by the employees of this Bureau will stop but I am determined to summarily dismiss from this Bureau any employee whom I find indulging in the use of intoxicants to any degree or extent upon any occasion. This, I can appreciate, is a very drastic attitude and I shall probably be looked upon by some elements as a fanatic. I am not, however, one of those who may be classed as a "white ribbon" advocate, but I do believe that when a man becomes a part of this Bureau he must so conduct himself, both officially and unofficially, as to eliminate the slightest possibility of criticism as to his conduct or actions. One cannot, therefore, safely indulge in the use of intoxicants even outside of office hours without the possibility of opening himself to criticism and attack, and for that reason I, myself, am refraining from the use of intoxicants to any degree or extent and I am not, therefore, expecting any more of the field employees than I am of myself.

I, of course, know that I cannot effectively meet the situation unless I have the whole hearted support of each and every Agent in Charge of this Bureau, for unless an Agent in Charge sets the proper example for his subordinates we cannot expect the subordinate Agents to observe the rule. I, therefore, am writing you to request that you aid me in this matter in setting a proper example for the rest of the service.

Our Agents are so frequently brought in contact with individuals of fanatical attitude relative to prohibition that any employee who indulges in the use of intoxicants is very apt to be referred to in language of a derogatory character, even though such employee may not be intoxicated. For that reason I believe that the employees of this Bureau should refrain from the use of intoxicants at all times and on all occasions. This Bureau cannot afford to have a public scandal visited upon it in view of the all too numerous attacks made upon the Bureau of Investigation during the past few years. I do not want this Bureau to be referred to in terms I have frequently heard used against other governmental agencies and it is for that reason that I am taking this somewhat rigid attitude towards the use of liquor. I do want to have the Bureau of Investigation an organization that will have the whole hearted support and respect of all law abiding citizens and I know that you have as much at heart the interest and welfare of this Bureau as I have and will, therefore, give me the necessary support that I must have in enforcing this rule.

154

So much for your personal attitude and conduct. I want you, in addition, to give more careful attention to the conduct of the employees attached to your office. I know that we may very frequently emphasize to the subordinate employees the rules and regulations of the service, but some of these employees do not take seriously enough the statements of such rules and regulations, and it is therefore, necessary, in my estimation, for the Agents in Charge at frequent intervals to check up the conduct and activities of the employees attached to their office. This applies to not only the employees immediately attached to your office, but to the representatives of this Bureau engaged on special assignments, anti-trust work and bank accountancy who come into your district from time to time. In order that there may be a rigid observance of this rule, I intend to dismiss from the service any employee whom I find guilty of violation of the rule and I shall demote any Agent in Charge in whose district such misconduct takes place if such Agent in Charge has not discovered the matter himself and reported it to me. In other words, if I learn of any misconduct upon the part of any employee of this Bureau from anyone other than the Agent in Charge in the district in which such misconduct takes place, I shall demote the Agent in Charge of that district because it is an indication that he is not fully performing the duties of his office in that he, himself, did not ascertain the existence of such misconduct.

I fully realize that some of the employees of the Bureau will not look with any too great a degree of pleasure or acquiescence upon these rules, but it is a matter of indifference to me whether these rules meet with the approval of the individual. What I am trying to do is to protect the force of the Bureau of Investigation from outside criticism and from bringing the Bureau of Investigation into disrepute because of isolated circumstances of misconduct upon the part of employees who are too strongly addicted to their own personal desires and tastes to properly keep in mind at all times and upon all occasions the honor and integrity of the service of which they are a part.

Therefore, effective immediately, I want you to give very close attention to the conduct and activities of all employees of this Bureau now in your district and who come within your district from time to time, as I shall hold you personally accountable for any misconduct of any character or degree. You should promptly report to me any conduct that may arise that in any way indicates a failure upon the part of the employees of this Bureau to observe these rules, and if, at any time, you desire assistance or outside Agents to ascertain whether or not certain conditions are existing, you should promptly communicate with me and I will give you the necessary assistance.

Very truly yours,

Director.

103

L. M. KEITH

Agent in Charge of Phoenix Office

I devoted practically the entire day 4-8-25 to interviews with U.S. Marshal Mauk, Asst. Dist. Atty Wilsom, Dist. Judge Jacobs, the Chief of Police and Chief of Detectives of Phoenix - they all had particularly commendatory comments to make as applying to Agent in Charge Keith and Acting Agent in Charge Davis.

They spoke especially of Agent Keith as "hitting the ball", as they expressed it, at all times, and that in his absence Agent Davis had continued Keith's standard of efficiency.

Quoted from letter 4-9-25 "Inspection of the Phoenix office"
by Inspector L.C. Wheeler.

Original filed 67-251-10

W

102

Department of Justice,

Bureau of Investigation.

Phoenix, Arizona,

May 13, 1925.

Attention Mr. Hoover

Director,
Bureau of Investigation,
Department of Justice,
Washington, D. C.

RECORDED & INDEXED

MAY 19 1925

42-10235

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Div. One

FILE

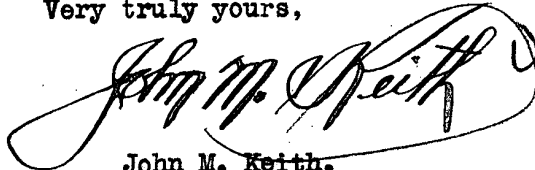
Dear Sir:

Your 'Personal and Confidential' letter of May 9, 1925, relative liquor drinking on the part of employees of this Bureau, has been received by me, and its contents carefully noted.

Please know, Mr. Hoover, that you have my hearty co-operation in carrying out the program laid down by you in this letter. I sympathize entirely with your attitude, and shall make it part of my personal duty to see that all employees of the Bureau stationed at Phoenix, and all outside employees of the Bureau, who come into this district on special assignment, either conform with the policies laid down by you, or have themselves reported for misconduct in this connection.

I am personally totally abstaining from the use of intoxicating liquor in any form at any time, and I shall see to it that the other employees of the Bureau in this district do the same.

Very truly yours,



John M. Keith,
Special Agent in Charge

JMK:MB

107