

Dear Js,

12/24/72

Before I forget, subject of a note I've just written Je, enclosed: last night at Ian's I was talking to a man whose name I have forgotten, with the Christian Science monitor, I think bureau chief DC. He said that Harsch always kept the home place in Rhode Island, ~~ix~~ goes there weekends, and is, I think, titled editorial page director but is in semi-retirement although he is not in the office full time. Dick Strout's name came up, as TRB and as a Monitor reporter (he is virtually a staffer-freelancer, picking what he wants to do while protesting at 70 he wants to take his regular turn). Strout also covered our hearings. Seems that over ~~ix~~ the years he has made some wise and profitable investments. While they have not changed his beliefs or his writings, they have tended to make him tend toward the more conservative in financial matters.

I didn't respond to your letter of 12/12/72 on the enclosed and returned in 3class R long Times story on pills. Howard had sent me a copy and I think I made passing comment on it then, without thought as deep as seems justified. I did, I think, note what would under most circumstances be considered an inordinate investment of manpower. His story did get a heavy radio/TV play, but all versions I heard noted that there is no indication he pumped speed into JFK and some others.

One of the possible initial intents may have had to do with tarnishing the JFK image, you suggested. Agreed. But that doesn't seem to warrant this investment. I think something much more ambitious might have been in someone's mind. Maybe a NYTimes book?

There is a legitimate point inherent if not explicit: what the hell kind of quack might some president not trust, what might he not feed or pump into that president, and what might the consequences not be?

I have had only the most limited and casual contact with this new culture, with only one person I suspected of being on speed, that strange N.O. chick; and two pot parties (all intellectuals and musicians except for one excessively beautifully formed young woman who later surfaced as one of the two whores in the Haggerty case-Jeanelle). If I can make any kind of judgement from that chick, it can be very, very dangerous for one on speed to be in a position to make any kind of important decision.

On Lissner,, at the risk of seeming to intend libel, which I do not, I remind you that the Nazis had ways of getting Jews to do their bidding, and outside of Germany. I think I've told you of the Schering guy. Dr. Julius Weltzien. Those dedicated Nazi correspondents were sometimes less than that dedicated, like Sorge (which I think means worry). It is hard to generalize, hard to eliminate, and there is no intended inference of L's being a real Nazi. His not seeming to be could be genuine as it could be part of a cover. Look at some of current patriots and super-patriots.

Some of those named might have been asked to ask a few questions where they were when the questions were to be asked and no more, but I wouldn't think that required crediting.

Some might have had specialized experience,, as takers and victims, like Sylvia, or with those who had, or might have had special relationships with those interviewed and quoted in the story. Belair is, I believe, in DC; Waldron in Texas.

If this is the same Lissner and he was a Der Angriff correspondent in 1938, even a young one, would he not be at retirement age? Would a son be a possibility? or nephew?

I was puzzled at the story when I heard it on the air, more so when I read it, and no less so now. Your concluding sentence sums up all I can say: too much in it to throw it away. Like other things the Times has/has not done that do not seem to make sense One possibility here might be a forecast of some kind, some sensation about a prominent person. Might even be a newspaper personage, if politicians may seem more likely. Remember Phil Graham was not immune to the ailments of the ordinary.

I'm carboning Howard, who also must have had some questions about this. He will thus be alert. Rather, more sensitive than his usual sensitive self.

Best,

HW:

12 December 1972

The attached long story on Dr. Jacobson is a puzzler. On one hand we feel there probably is some reason for publishing it just at this time, something having to do with the JFK image, and on the other it's possible that a lengthy project on which several people have worked has only now got to the publishable stage. A still further possibility is that Jacobson may have been in the news locally in a way which we hadn't noticed.

Among the authors and researchers you will recognize the names of Martin Waldron, Felix Belair Jr, and possibly Martin Tolchin and Lawrence K. Altman. Ben Franklin is a comparative newcomer.

There's one extremely interesting other one, Will Lissner. I am virtually certain this is the same Will Lissner whom I met in Manchuria in 1938 while covering a little-known Russo-Japanese war along the Siberian, Manchurian and North Korean border confluence that lasted three weeks before it was settled by negotiation in Moscow. Lissner, then a very young man, was acting as a correspondent for Der Angriff, which was Dr. Goebbels' own newspaper. However he did not behave or talk like a Nazi and in fact I was inclined to guess that he either was Jewish or part Jewish. (This was not uncommon; there was an extremely able Frankfurter Zeitung correspondent in China for several years, Guenther Stein, who was part Jewish). Lissner was exceptionally able in English for a German, so much so that he easily could have been educated at least partly in an English-speaking country. I never fully figured him out, and never saw him again. However in 1949 when back in Shanghai I ran into a Dr. Lissner who was with UNRRA and who appeared to resemble Will. I asked him about Will, and he said he was a brother. However I did not pursue the matter further except to ask if Will had come through the war okay, and he said he had. A few years ago Will's byline began cropping up in the NY Times occasionally, and I have little doubt this is the same person. He's the type who would land on his feet, had connections all over the place, obviously, and the only real mystery is how he happened to wind up at the Times. I'd say that because of his German background he would be an excellent hand to have working on the Jacobson story.

If you sense any real purpose in this long thing about Jacobson we'd like to know what you think. And unless you need it for some particular purpose, you might return it in your next 3rd class mailing. No Hurry. It's just that one feels there must be something about this effort that means it would be a mistake to throw it away.

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