

Phone call from George McMillan, ending 12:10 p.m. 1/14/81

George said he was doing a review of a book by Lifton and wanted to talk to me about him and it. He then said by the way, how did you get into all of this, and I told him. He asked what I'm doing with my records, and I told him. He asked the thrust of my work and I told him it was not a search for assassins but a study of our institutions in time of great crisis. He asked the major conclusion and I told him that a short answer is that in these times of gross stress and afterward the institutions fail. After the conversation had been about me for a while I asked him what he wanted to know about Lifton or the book. He said sorry, I've run out of money. I said what the hell kind of a bastard are you, you call me up under the pretense that you want help on a review and it turns out that you intend to write about me. So how about sending me a copy of what you publish. He said, "Nope." I said "George, you are being a bad little boy. If you won't send it to me there is nothing I can do about that," except to judge him by it.

I have no idea why he wanted to know this information about me for a review of a Lifton book unless he is doing a different piece or intends to use that one as the launching pad for an attack on all critics. Or what prompted him to be so dishonest about it. If he'd not used such a phoney approach I'd still have answered his questions and he might have gotten more information. I have the impression that his purpose is slander, however.

When he asked about how I began and I mentioned that the Post and other papers had no interest in other than the official handouts he asked who at the Post and I did not remember to whom I'd spoken. He then tried to put names in my mouth, was it Al Friendly, Ben Gilbert?