6/23/69

Dear Gary,

Your letter of 6/19, with enclosed letter to Dave and to and from Edelman, and your two larger mailings,, arrived yesterday. These inlcuded Playboy, Manchester's Holiday, the two weaver pix, True 11/68 and the Alvarez correspondence (Was Renner referring to a book I do not have or recall?). I have resumed writing, have drafted six chapter of the second part of COUP and am pushing on it, and I expect to have to go to NYC Thursday, so, for me, I'll be brief.

Let me straighten one new thing out, your reference to Fred,"that his relationship with you was dismembered by a combination of disagreements in letters and Lifton from the other end." About Lifton, I presume he had something to do with it if he could. The first part isn't true, not even warranted by extension. Out of a clear blue sky, bing! a nasty letter. I sent you a copy of it any my reply. There had been no dsiagreement, no complaint or suggestion of one that I recall. I think it was my asking him for fact on Farewell. It was in repsonse to such a letter..Lifton , the little bag-exiting helper!

Once earlier you had indicated the belief you held, that Lifton seemed to know the content of my work, unpublished.,I think someone else also did. This disturbs me,, for I have let each of those few with whom I deal in Calif know my feelings for him and that when I send them things in confidence it means no one else.mYour reference to Nichols bothers me more, for that limits the sources. It also indicates he has had verbal, not visual adcess. I will try and explain in terms of your quotation.

John did ask me for an affidavit and for several others as a consequence of what he apparently didn't knoe and of which I told him in a long memo of which you have a copy. The government's response in his syit was false in claiming noone is ever allowed to handle any of the tangible evidence. I told him that when Dick and Tom and I were there we had all handled it, and that on other occasions I had. He sent me a draft of the statement he had prepared for Dick to sign, asked me to get Tom to make a similar one, and for one from me. I arranged for Tom's and made my own, adding to it much I ddeemed relecant to the issue. I sent it in rough draft, then retyped and executed. I told him I had added what I believed he also wanted but that if this were not the case, to let me know or send me the language his lawyer wanted. His response was that his lawyer liked it the way it was, that it was much better that way. His "All Nichols apparently wanted was statements which showed that researchers have been permitted to handle the evidence". Nichols knew only of the cases and 399, and that is all he asked for. It is I who converted this into "the evidence", and John, from his comment, is tickled. I haven't the slightest idea what he could rationally mean in saying "I think this affidavit could really muddy certain waters, espcecially as there is no distinction drawn between "pictures of a splice" and "splice". This also, however, may further limit. Let us take this apart: If John or his lawyer had been in any way dissatisfied, they'd have asked for whatever it is Dave is (I think) guessing that they want. Now, there is nothing in the affidavit of either pictures or splices. You have a copy. However, separately, I called to his attention what Dick had not told me in the Archives, alas, that when I wasn't with him in that room and he examined some negatives I didn't, those represented as taken through a comparison microscope were two in each case, in each case pasted together. Then a print was made. Id this is true it could be highly significant and is fakery. I suggested that he should check this out and asked him if he wanted me to. I also suggested he ask certain certifications of the Archivist. I am confident I sent you and Paul and only the two of you copies of this. I do not think I mentioned it directly to Hal,but I might have. I do not know what he means by asking "Could Harold have choseb something else he has examined in order to make his point?"

This is either fishing of some obtuse sort or a misunderstanding of what he had been told or a misunderstood accounting given him or a combination. Read the aff. and see for yourself.

I think the great distortion eliminates John as a source. That would seem to leave Paul and Hal or Jim. Any one shakes me, for I have been so blunt on this! I have no basis for selection. However, after the Paul R thing I asked Paul not to permit the making of any unnecessary copies. If he hasn't and Hal or Jim has read what I sent and not really comprehended it, this could follow.

This matter is not in a different category. I continue not to care about the behind-the-back defamations, but I would like to have everything you have indicating leaks and their possibile origin(s). I think that is vital, perhaps literally. I think it may be enough to put Lifton, sane or not, in a different category also. As you put it, all the way. But not necessarily alone. Fred may be his fall guy on other things than you suggest, perhaps "all the way".

I fear what he says and thinks that to me is wierd may be exciting to Hal, who could well credit what you and I would not. I think Paul has perhaps some slight doubt but thinks him a sincere, unselfish critic. Of him and jim I know nothing.

From now on I'll have to be more careful about some things. If my work is to be mine and more, if it is not to be open to opposition before it is completed, this will have to extend to everything I intend publishing.

On your contact in England, there is something I would like but do not require. I would not want him asked to try and get it if he would spread copies. In this case it is entirely literary selfishness that impels me to make this stipulation. I have an enormous investment in COUP and I do not want it vitiated. It will be important without this. But others using this if I pinpoint it could take the edge off. That would be ruinous to me. I have made repeated and serious efforts to get the evidence used against Ray, in court. Ray's lawyer, the US embassy, the Home Office, and the court, all have it. If it means copying that is too expensive (assuming he is not denied it for me), with a list of the affidavits, I would specify. Before asking him to try, make this stipulation. If he is agreeable, I will then write and tell him what I have done so he can either avoid it or try a possibly better means. If he is not willing to keep this for me, I do not want it done. When you see the additions to COUP I think you will better understand me. If he does and sends it to you, make a copy for yourself and we can go over it together. You may see what I do not. I'll send you what I see. In asking him, do not say what it is, but do specify official records that should be public and to which there may be opposition. Also warn him of the possibility of retaliation, for we do not want him to walk into anything that might hurt him. This is especially true if he is an American.

No time for more. Gotta work. I know you want your letter to have back. I'll copy it soon and return. I plan to read the other things on the way to NYC Thursday, and I'll copy and return after I return, or as soon as I can get free enough. I have the Paramilitary Right piece and will not copy, but will save for them for postage and insurance reasons. What I'd like, if you can find the time, is a small slip of paper with a list of what I'm to return so that after New York I can keep it by the machine and check it off as I do it. I'm also getting to the bottom of that box of paper. I do not want, by mistake, to overlook anything, and when I'm away, working on other things, as this time, some of them complicated, with the writing on my mind, then all of this gets mixed in, then I get mail on other things, well, there is a chance. Sorry about the typos again. Russ is here, by the way, until some time tomorrow. He has left Chi and for a short period will be in NYC. I think you have not been in touch. Last minute: has Bernabei been in touch with Lifton? Best,

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June 19, 1969

Dear Harold,

The flak Hal is getting against you, if any, comes from Lifton, or perhaps, from Lifton through Newcomb. But Fred never even mentions Hal so I suspect more Lifton directly. But I would bet my bottom dollar that it is Lifton. Newcomb, when he writes of you, seems to parrot Lifton, and has written me things which indicate that his relationship with you was dismembered by a combinations of disagreements in letters and Lifton from the other end. Sometimes I can even easily see Lifton's typical phraseology, which happens to be much different from that of either Fred or Mary (fortunately for us), in Fred's letters to me. Then, in Lifton's letter to me of May 31, we find: "You are, as they say, in a 'bag,' similar to one which I have help-d others get out of on this issue; ..." (emphasis added--there it is, in black and white, written by someone who places himself on Olympus)

Since this disagreeable subject is up, since you know from me and perhaps others that Lifton is currently quite active (at least with regard to me) against you, I should tell you a few other items which are important, one of which I have refrained from making clear to you because it was very disturbing, and at the same time, might not be true. Lifton has given me clear indicati or at least made definite claims to have spoken with someone who had read either both or one of your recent two manuscripts and have some knowledge of the contents. (He has, of course, tried an incredible amount of pumping on me, but I am certain come up with little more than my own attempts to elic it info from him to see who he has, or if it could be important.) He did this on the phone and I was unable to get a clear idea of his source, although one thing which might help is that I think the discussion dealt with the autopsy, and therefore, it is more likely he was referring to Post Mortem. Furthermore, in his letter to me of June 7 of this year we find the following:

> "(And by the way, in connection with Nichol's suit, Harold is apparently filing an affadavit, under some May, 1969 date, stating that he has been permitted to handle and examine the Archives Z film and has checked it for splices, and that there was none. All Nichols apparently wanted was statements which showed that researchers have been permitted to handle evidence. I think this affadavit could really muddy certain waters, especially as there is no distinction drawn between "pictures of a splice" and "splice." Do you know about this affadavit and do you think it is a wise thing??? Couldn't Harold have chosen something else he has examined in order to make his point??)"

Now Harold, this shook me up, because you just sent me that thing pretty recently, and I have never mentioned it to anyone and assumed that it was top secret. Idoubt if Dave could have gotten it from Nichols since he did not know about Nichol's lawsuit a while back (Icannot believe that he would have lied about this, since at the time he was trying to impress me with how much he knew, even from the Garrison camp). You know better than I who else that leaves. To find this in his letter really shocked me, especially given the previous comments he has made about knowing someone who had read your stuff, or knowing someone close to you who allegedly agreed about your tendency to claim things were your work when they weren't (the latter could be Lifton's distortion, but I doubt if it is complete fabrication, since he is generally careful when quoting people, since he needs allies badly), etc. All I can say is that Lifton can be very convincing, except when he loses his control and starts raving, and that he is good at pumping, as you have said, and that he is good at putting pressure on people.

On Hal, bear in mind that he just may be busy, and that his work on the case has slacked off a bit and he just may have gotten out of touch.

Although not having experienced it myself, I think that I can understand your bitter feelings about not having gotten decent treatment in LA and still suffering financially as a result, while they live in the suburbs and philosophize, etc. Especially now, when some of them are spreading lies about you, and denying they ever needed you for anything, and denouncing you in general.

The comments which I passed on from Lifton, and to which you so eloquently and rapidly responded, from what both Fred and Dave have dropped during phone conversations, and rarely in letters, are representative of the double faced character of these people, or perhaps emotional distress or illness. They have said these things before behind your back. I have not repeated them because they were largely second hand and not in writing and I felt that you were above them and also that you would waste time, as you have in the past weeks, refuting them. This type of infighting and cliquesmanship has undoubtedly cost the critics more than the flak from the other side. One of the reasons I abandoned my early desire to do a book on the critics was that to be honest, I would have to make a record of something which is better kept hidden from the rest of the world, so as not to discredit the work which has been done nor detract too much from the generally romatic imagine the average guy has about the critics. As for Mark, his work against you would have accomplished nothing were it not for those who received his words and did what they did as a result, so I consider that the least of the trajedies. (Mark's great trajic contribution has been his public work on this.) Also bear in mind that MuMu, Maggie, and others tend to build their worlds around social circles, parties, etc., and the same is true of Garrison, Sahl, and the rest. It is ironic that such a frantic fight as the critics should have waged was detracted from by the social niceties and desire for manners and soft words, rather than a staunch concern for the truth about everything from the assassination to their everyday lives. It is better to sip drinks on a veranda and take everything intellectually than it is to work your ass off, fight the establishment, and insist on such things of others as you do. As a student of human behavior I have sat & watched this since 1966 when I first got to know Vince, and I have relived it through correspondence files, etc., but it is a disgusting thing to see, since all of it was at least semi-predictable, although I would never have wanted to make the predictions. Right now I am greatly hampered by having only an idea of what happens on the West Coast, but it looks like Lifton all the way.

By the way, unless I am way off, Fred has been Lifton's fall guy for trying to see what I know about certain things which Dave is interested in more info on. The clippings about the Army being chided to strike in Germany the day of the assassination is a good example, and the same is true from Fred's last letter which dealt with a guy who looks like he could have been set up as a patsy in San Antonio. I am certain that these things come from Dave, because Dave is interested in both, and Fred not only has no knowledge, but the sources are beyond Fred's investigative work. I am playing the game, not letting them know I have caught on, but the childishness astonishes me. I have been with this thing since I heard Mark speak in Ithaca in 1964 and am not fooled by such stunts. Again, it is fascinating to observe as a psychologist. I am wondering how far they will go. I just gave them quite a bit of bait. What really blows my mind is not Fred but Lifton, who considers himself an intelligence man par excellance. It is really a great temptation to expose this nonsense, but I just have to watch where it goes. It gives me some idea of what Dave is doing at no expense to myself.

Well, best wishes. I hope that the thing with Hal works out, and suspect that it will. Silence is a tough thing to deal with, and once that is ended I am sure these things will be ironed out. But if there is a leak we must find it, or at least plug it for the future. My best regards to Lillian.

Gary

P.S. Now have a good contact in England who knows the case well. Is there anything he can do for you? He sounds like a good man, and has corresponded w/ Tom Katen for some time.