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June 11, 1966

Mr. Art Buchwald
1750 Pennsylvania Ave.
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Buchwald

When I snuck up behind you at the convention of the American Booksellers' Association at seven minutes after 11 the morning of June 8 and furtively handed you, from behind while you were still walking away, a copy of my book WHITEWASH: THE REPORT ON THE WARREN REPORT, I had a deep sinister motive (you'll excuse the expression). This was also the case two years ^{ago} /when at 3:55 p.m. on the second Saturday in June, backstage at the Easton, Md. high school, when you were honored as chicken father (again, please excuse the expression) of the year, when the flattened cigar-end was beginning to drizzle, I also offered you a proposition.

My complete inability to remember anything about the Easton proposition and my experiment with the distribution of WHITEWASH convinces me I have made a fantastic discovery that might interest you as a column subject. It may not be quite as good an idea as the Soviet replacement for France in NATO, but then you haven't worked it over like that cigar-end.

It's really an idea for the CIA that I thought you might want to develop, as only you can. It cost me quite a bit of other people's money to carry the experiment to the point where I turn it over to you. But after giving the working (should I again ask you to excuse the expression) press about \$1,500 worth of WHITEWASH and waiting something less than patiently, it suddenly dawned on me that this was not a complete waste.

Yes,
~~Then,~~ suddenly like a flash from the ~~blue~~^{EV and Jerry} it dawned on me: I had invented something better than an encoding machine, less dangerous than Mata Hari, prettier than Allen Dulles, cleaner than carrier pigeons, less technical than radar and satellites - almost as safe a way of keeping secrets as entrusting them to Mr. O'Brien's new, improved and refurbished United States Mails!

Print them in a book and give them to the ^(apology) press!

Never in history has a secret been so carefully preserved. If they gotta read it themselves, the CIA has it made and their secrets are safe.

There are, of course, as with even Everett McKinley Dirksen's hospital bed, a few hazards that might not immediately be anticipated, and I hurry to call several that occur to me to your attention before you booby-trap the Langley "Bureau of Public Roads". Suppose the Russians or Chinese get hold of it and turn out a press release? The press release might just get read. Or suppose there is a dull day, with ^{only} LBJ throwing bear can into the Federnales, Fullbright in the Ozarks and Morse at the Grand Coulee? Is it possible a reporter might get so bored he might read ~~and~~ read ~~and~~ EDOK?

The future also portends a certain jeopardy. After all, Maza Gerber has a machine that predigests bananas. Think the Russians might do that with books?

~~Until~~ that day comes, however, I think the safest bet for the CIA's secrets is to print them in a book, spending a lot of money on it, give it a title that should suggest sensational news, and then distribute it widely among the (ooops, I almost said "working") press.

P.S. This technique should be almost as safe as Rusk.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg