

Mr. M.J.Conklin
Box 362
Canton, Ill. 61520

3/11/76

Dear Mike,

When what ^{Les} promised me was not in this morning's mail and your letter of the 8th was I phoned him. He was out of town, so I left word for Gary to call me. He did about 8:30. It is now after 9, so we spoke for close to a half hour. And I had to lie for you because he said he thinks his caller was M.J.Conklin. (I don't call it "in-accuracies.")

He had not mentioned earlier the playing of a tape of Ford Rowan and ~~Wiley~~ Colby to him by phone. He was reminded of this and asked me if Ford had been in touch.

After getting your letter I decided it would be best to do some tracing.

Before I forget, he has promised to send me what I said I'd send you.

He is not sure of the date of the first anonymous call to him but is certain it was quite some time before something happened that reminded him of it. I'll work backward so you can understand it better.

The column was done and in the Friday before it appeared, or February 27. The previous Tuesday he got a call from one of his sources. When he saw that source he was given a heavily-masked documents that mentioned one of the cypronyms he recalled from the first call. It is then that he went to ~~xxx~~ work in earnest. This was after the first and second calls to you. However, before the third call, when they had the column ready, they asked the CIA if it had any comment. It was undoubtedly at the very end of their work on the column, maybe the day it went out.

The only other person he can think of who could have fed back is Gunn.

Before I explain some reasoning to you he apologized for not mailing me what he had said he would and Les had told him to. With ^{Les} out sick and then having to leave town he hadn't gotten to it. What I know it will include is the Inspector General's report and this masked or partly-masked document. Unless it comes overnight I'll not be able to mail it until I return from the trip. But I will.

He saw his source about something entirely different, by the way. This is just coincidence, he is sure. I'm less sure. I think there must be people who want this out.

As I believed, he out two and two together. But when I had to deny that you were the man who phoned him he asked the obvious question, why had you given him a name as that of one who knew much? My reply was that you must have felt that if he were able to check that name it could ~~lead~~ lead to something. Should he check it at the Agency? I recommended that for the immediate he not. I explained this by saying you had told me you did not want others to be hurt and that hurt is possible. It is true of others so he could see it. However, from what you tell me of the phone calls it is also clear that you are non anonymous where it counts.

In this connection I'd like you to think two things over: trusting them to know what they already believe; and deciding for yourself whether you want them to make any kind of check with their agency sources. On the latter I think you should assume that their Agency sources, no matter how close the relationship, will regard their primary obligation as to the Agency. However, not knowing their contacts, I can't say if it includes those who want this kind of rotten stuff ended, those who have leaked. I think it is not impossible but I can't estimate the odds.

Until you tell me otherwise, I'll not identify you to them. But I think it would be better not only so they'll trust but on the chance we can get them to make other checks.

Please think about these two things: the February 6 and 11 calls to you were prior to his doing anything on this story. The March 1 call was on the first working day after their column was in. The latter may be coincidence but it also followed their talking to Gunn. (I've assumed Mr. G is Gunn, not Gottlieb, and I notice one of the parts of the ad was not a date.) So, please try to figure out if there is any apparent correlation between any one of your inquiries and the first call. There is another obvious one with the last, their asking CIA for comment.

With these calls to you I more strongly ~~more~~ encourage your making and depositing as full a record as you can as soon as you can.

After I read your letter I called the Enquirer. My friend is still on vacation. It ends this week. His editor knows where he is because he is going to work on a story on his way back. They were to call him today. I may hear from them tomorrow. If I do I'll ~~let~~ let you know before I leave. If he hasn't called me by the time I return I'll call him.

I'm a bit tired. This happens when the special support I wear is not on exactly right. It also is not a good fit. It is being replaced. Anyway, I may not be expressing myself clearly. But I don't think any of this was picked up by phone. The first two call to you could not have been and the third has too many other more likely explanations. I don't think you have to be afraid of the phone but if you do, use a pay phone. It is better to communicate than to be immobilized. Besides, I doubt you know anything that isn't known. All that can be picked up is understanding, not fact. And what others would know.

If you have personal fears, the best protection is having no secrets, at least by getting the knowledge to others.

If you are not aware of it, Les went to ~~the~~ jail rather than disclose a source. The FBI arrested him. He was tried. And acquitted. I think the case was thrown out. We have this kind of working relationship: he came to see me when I was in the hospital. He had an FBI report but he couldn't understand it and I presume why it had been leaked to him. I read it once, handed it back, made a few suggestions, he did what I suggested, and he established a previously unknown FBI back channel for hiding from and lying to the Warren Commission.

Registered mail is kept in a special part of the local post office, in a special safe. If you should send me something when I'm not home it will be held in that safe until I get for it.

I think that in time this will all work out.

Best regards,