

Dear Jim,

5/23/75

George Pardner phoned me last night in response to a two-day old message he did not receive until then. I had chided him to tell him about the threat by Lane to throw me out if I attended the press conference ~~Monday~~ yesterday and to update him on # 226075 because he had earlier expressed an interest in being kept up on how it is going.

George was working late. I had decided to get to bed earlier and was brushing my teeth when he called, about 9:30. (As it turned out it was close to one before I could get to and stay in bed and I had to get up before 5 to catch up on a number of things and get Lil going for a trip she is making with a sister to see their other sister.) This late hour at the paper can mean a CIA or Rockefeller Commission story in the late editions that is not in the one I get.

George was disgusted with the whole Lane story. He wanted to know the names of the new CCI and I read them off. I gave him my opinion that Lane had conned some decent people into this together with the nuts and self-seekers and that the net result will be a disaster to the chances of doing something about cleaning the whole thing up. I told him that I had sent a message to Lane that I would be there for him, personally, to throw out and that while I know Lane well enough to expect him not to do it, still, on oht chance, I thought it might make a story. (It was a no-loose deal for Lane, who could and I think did persuade his people that I was going to create a disturbance knowing I would not and then to be able to say that only what he said and did prevented it. Bud had told you that this was my purpose almost as soon as it was possible for Lane to be in touch with Bud.)

(This has reached the point where I believe that if anyone expresses an interest in taking a new look at Lane I'll open my files.)

George was interested and asked me to read off all the names. He was openly dismayed when he asked where the press conference was held and I gave him the address. "Halperin's?" he ask, in disbelief? I told him Lane had talked Halperin into this long ago and thus George's interest in the others.

In the course of the conversation, which lasted about an hour, he said that the Post desk had decided that the 1/22 transcript story was no more than a repeat of the old November Baker story. He appears to have asked the desk how come the story was not used and gotten this answer. I told him that unless one transcript story ends all transcript stories there was no essence to truth in this and that Claiborne had discussed good news values in parts of the transcript I had not read at the 4/25/75 news conference. I also told him of otherplay. (Big in Dallas, too.) He expressed a low opinion of the judgement displayed in yesterday's CIA-Chutch story, the admission of CIA illegal acts by Colby. He did not say so, but I think George may be beginning to get the idea that something other than editorial judgement is involved in the handling and non-handling of some of these stories and I think he said that some of the reporters had discussed this. (Which makes the Harcourt letter I read last night have more point.)

I discussed the hearing in 226-75 with him in some detail and without restraint in expressing my feelings about what is up and what I plant to do. He seems all for this personally, on an impersonal basis, that is, in the interest of the viability of the law.

I said that I take the judge's saying that he took the government to be acting in good faith, his accepting a non-responsive affidavit from a man not qualified to make a first-person statement and his opinion that he could accept "substantial compliance" as compliance, to be a new determination to rewrite the law outside of congress. To this I added a fairly pointed account of the affidavit I have drafted and its purposes. This seemed to be something of which George approved. I did not ask his opinion and he did not offer one. I take this from the nature and tone of the discussion. There were two indications of his possible story interest. One he several times asked how soon we could have it done (I told him I whoped it could be filed some time prior to the issuance of the Rockefeller Report) and could he have a copy.

I take this to mean that we really should rush and have the form comprehensible to those knowing less than the judge and Ryan. Best, HW