

12/6/72

Dear Pearl,

Your letter of the 28th came today. You'd been on my mind lately because of the long silence.

You are finally beginning to put it all together, as the kids say.

Yes, it could make sense with another country substituted for China, and one close to it only.

There are two things you say in it for the first time that could be relevant and are limiting: Joel's placing the time of his meeting Vidal at about 1950 and his 1953 visit to Taiwan.

With no independent knowledge, I can buy the narcotics angles, separated from what you were off on, the countries impossible because of their principles.

Now, in the 1950-3 period, the SEAsia narcotics business was in its infancy as regards the United States and in large quantities. I am no expert in these matters, but based on my limited knowledge, I'd say the major US sources then ~~was~~ were near East Vietnam. When there was intrusion, or competition, new channels were set up. This at ~~that~~ time involved Mexico as a route or way station. The French connection was direct and largely through Canada. The Mexican connection continued for some time and I believe was active at the time of Joel's arrest. Together with eliminating China, I think we can eliminate India as a source. My recollection is that while the Pakistanis were in it, their stuff came through other countries, production in Pakistan, refining in SEAsia. I think for your purposes, you can also eliminate Pakistan.

This leaves, aside from Taiwan, only what used to be French Indo-China, and that fits. It served intelligence interests for its hired hands to be unmolested, indeed, helped, in this rotten business, and the CIA helped many of the SEAsia horse traders, who were also doing its bidding. In recent months this has been well documented. I've referred you to standard, public sources.

In upper Thailand this also involved Chiang remnants who are still there and have always been in horse.

Going along with this I think you should keep Striso in mind, his admitted anti-Communism, his claimed Chinese connections, his allegations of CIA connections, and all the rubbish he piled in your mind all pointing the opposite of the correct way. You should be asking yourself why. And being careful! Not just Striso. The others who gave you the same pushes in the wrong direction. As you think of these things, please try to keep in mind that they obviously figured you for uninformed or had typical male superiority attitudes about women's intelligence. Either may help you figure more.

Joel as part of this rotten trade can make sense, as it can make sense of the pinning of the bum rap on him, of the Vidal disappearance, of all of it. That may or may not mean CIA, and I encourage you to consider both possibilities, being severe with your own thinking on its having a direct involvement in the heroin sales other than as carrier in SEAsia or through native dealers. I really don't think it would want its US citizens mixed up in this rotten stuff. Ask yourself also if pretenses of intelligence involvement don't also make a pretty good cover. As I recall some of the things you've told me or shown, there are others that are not reasonable, such as shipping rifles to Castro. He had no such need. Especially not at a premium, without which there is no smuggling profit. I'm making some pretty broad hints, but for the rest, do your own thinking to decide whether or not these suggestions are reasonable.

Once your ideas take form, you might want to try them out on old man Velasquez, who knows much, including what he has not told you.

The name Bobick means nothing, but that is not true of Bobicht. Can't remember how, but New Orleans pops into my head.

If Joel were really the romantic type, in 1950 he could well have been in Vietnam or thereabouts clandestinely, for the then-new CIA, which began with the policy now familiar. You should understand that this was everybody's policy, including the military and the diplomats'. It was crazy. It included Ho Chi Minh, who had been friendly to the US, Mao and Chou, who wanted to be, etc. and I think the first major activity was in Laos, aside from the Dulles/Nixon line for the entire area. Remember, Allan was CIA head when John was Secretary of State and John was active there before he was Secretary of State. The last thing that happened in Korea before hostilities began was John's going there.

For a general background, you might want to read the Laos chapter of Ross & Wise's *The Invisible Government*. There you will learn that when JFK's policy changes, nobody else's did and his was frustrated. Which means the others were set on their way.

Aside from American spooks, what always follows American aggression or military activity, whichever way you look at it, is American money, carpet-baggers and wheeler-dealers or various kinds. 1950 was Truman time. I think this would tend to limit the places in the orient Kaplan and Vidal could have met. Aside from relatively open Japan, the most likely places are Taiwan, Korea and Thailand. Laos would not have been impossible, but it would have been more difficult and less promising without official connection. Saigon, of course, was not impossible under the French. You know more than I about the relevant things, so I can't make any better suggestions on where they could have met. The Luftmenschen do fly.

You say "might see you next month". Hope so. I presume this means this month, for it is more than a week since you wrote. Plan to stay long enough to talk lots of things over, including if you decide then making some tapes of some of your other properties where I think you do better with an (appreciative) audience. Like what might be *Cortez Never Had It So Good!*

I presume if you come you'll be in New York. Please accept a strong caution on Jerry, who is akin to those you call the Ramparts thieves. Believe me rather than be sorry. And don't mention his name to Lil, who still looks for walls to climb over the things he really did. It has only been two weeks since someone else retrieved some of my pictures he clipped without telling me and held after he said he held nothing. If we had not needed them for court, we'd never have known he had them.

If you do come, please try to give me an approximate schedule so I can save you part of the trip by picking you up in Baltimore or Washington. If I know in time I can schedule work to coincide with your getting to either place, save you the fare and the time. I'd rather do this than make the extra trip, for the car has more than 100,000 miles on it, we can't replace it, and are so hard pressed even the slight operating and parking costs are burdensome.

We do look forward to seeing you.

Best,

*Club de Columnistas*

*Presidente*

*Alfredo La Mont*

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Nov. 28, 1972

Dear Harold,

Please excuse long delay in writing - I've been busy as hell, tell you another time - however, nothing truly important, just earning a living.

Re China: I'm convinced, I'm convinced. However, if you substitute the country China with another country - would it make sense? Reason is based on very concrete information I got from Joel and a lawyer I talked to here from NY who was supposedly a friend of Joel's. He told me Joel's passport was stamped on entry into Taiwan about 1953. I told Joel about it who seemed very upset this lawyer (Edward Bobick of NYC described as the biggest milker of the Kaplan cow - yet from recent evidence I see he and Joel are still friends) gave me such information. Joel said he was going to go but changed his mind. When I relayed this message to Bobick he said funny Joel denied going when his passport shows he entered. What runs through my mind besides narcotic smuggling, is the fact Joel has never revealed (in even to the Ramparts thieves) how and where he met Vidal. The key could be in the Far East - Joel told me it was around 1950. He makes a point of not talking about it, especially where. What do you make of it?

I'm not at home so can't return your clippings but will in a day or two. Thanks for putting up with all the trouble you've had with me! - but still, something happened out there at least near China!

Might see you next month.

Best to you and Lil,