

Dear Howard,

5/9/77

If my typing is worse than usual we are without power, have been for about an hour and will be for perhaps another half-hour. Beginning last night, with explosive suddenness and force, we've had high winds, gusting in greater than hurricane force. Today has not been all that bad. I went into town for some shopping, this time remembering a new ribbon. Putting it in and a little hand mowing is what I've been doing while there is less than good light in my office.

I've also just had a call from a James Martin, with Chic magazine, in San Francisco. They are doing a story on the prospects of Carter being assassinated. I chilled him and it all I could. If I made it less irresponsible I'm lucky.

The Palm Beach papers on deM are helpful, thanks. Glad to get them. The tidbits on Epstein seem not to be carried elsewhere.

I presume you'll have the current New Times piece before this reaches you so you'll know that Sprague blabbed a bit. He knew without investigating, as I'm sure you'll remember having heard, that Ray's finger pulled the trigger. And his departure means the Warren Commission critics have another ten years of life. This says all he has to about the reason he took the job when he had the apparent conflict of interest we both commented on publicly. I doubt any of the major media will see this and say something. As I'm noted when we spoke before, in calatolguing his enemies Sprague managed to omit two who were outspoken.

The recent statements attributed to that Nazi Kershaw have little proximity to fact. It is true that Jimmy was at a gas station and it is true that there was tire trouble. But even that it was a sprax is not true. It was not Willie Green, whose name is Willis. Jimmy learned this from ~~ex~~ me when he told me that's not the guy. (Kershaw attributes it to private detectives working on the case- and Green has denied it.)

If you've seen the stories based on Lane's statements, well, it also is not true that Hoover and the FBI forced King to switch to the Lorraine from the Rivermont. He never stayed at the Rivermont, always stayed at the Lorraine, and the one time he was at the place where Lane takes a suite, the Rivermont, was when the cops took him there.

These stories were not in any paper I saw. I learned when a west-coast reporter friend sent me xeroxes of UPI wire copy. Two Sundays straight the national desk or higher power on the Pst killed a Lardner story connecting Lane and the House committee. It was Lardner's idea, not mine, and I avoided volunteering until after the story was supposed to have appeared yesterday, when I made a couple of other suggestions for the future. I did respond to his inquiries. It is a legitimate story, more for Washington, whose delegate in Congress is chairman of the King subcommittee - even more when he has again made the suggestion that those reporters who report what he does not like have to be CIA. McCarthyism.

George offered no explanation of why the story did not appear and I asked for none because that would have embarrassed him. He had expected it to be used, as he told me when he phoned on another matter. (I suggested a week ago that he submit it to the NYReview.)

From the way they've been speaking to me I've been expecting the NYTimes to take the committee's reports and the executive session transcript let out by mistake and do a juxtaposing with reality. I hope the Sprague nastiness to Anson in New Times encourages this. The reporter who spoke to me is the unnamed one slurred by Sprague, the one put on the story he says instead of Burnham. The actuality is he is a fine reporter. The Times seems to have enticed him away from Philadelphia because he knows Sprague from his work there. From

which he is a recent Pulitzer winner. His name is Wendell Rawls. He impressed me as a good person. Last I heard from him was a week ago today, when he asked me to save a seat next to me at Lane's press conference. Rather Prentice-Hall's. The Times was not there. Surprisingly there seemed to be no foreign press, either.

Any assault on the federal agencies today is news copy, so the Lane fabrications about the FBI could be expected to attract attention. They did on ABC, as an exclusive. However, they were a lead balloon elsewhere, to the best of my knowledge. That thing was staged and orchestrated, too, with quite a staff from both Prentice-Hall and Mark's committee there. Not all that many reporters. Fact is I have hired that same East Room of the National Press Club. I did not close off the back, as P-H did to make it appear crowded, and without all the Danish and coffee and free breakfasts and movies, etc., I had more people there two years ago than Lane did a week ago. I suggest that this, with the Times absence bearing on it, reflects an increasing understanding of what is real on this subject. I am not suggesting that the real can expect a play. I am saying the day when the unreal could depend on it is past. The UPI story, as you will see, is less than a page. And after a week I have not heard of its being used.

It is not impossible that some editorial genius at the WxPost has decided that any mention of Lane's name might sell a book for him and that this accounts for their failure to use Lardner's story. It is also possible that up top they do not want to expose their own "liberal" Fauntroy. The little would-be lord was on a Washington talk show Saturday night. Lardner has the videotape of it from the station and will make a sound tape from it. He had called me to tell me it was on. I'd known, however. I have two tapes, one not bad but not of the best quality. If you are interested from either Lardner's or ~~his~~ my better one I can provide a dub. The reason I feel sure he'd do this is because I lend him tapes I receive from out-of-town shows, talk, that is, of interest to him. He also knows that I do not try to influence his stories. However, I do not recommend that you take time for the political Gantrys.

How Mark reached Prentice-Hall I do not know, and it may be entirely innocent. But I cannot forget that his book focuses on the FBI. And that there have been Prentice-Hall offices virtually if not actually shared with CIA outfits. If there is relevance the CIA's interest is transparent.

We've had an unusual coincidence: current restored and a full sun on a cloudy day.

Yesterday's Baltimore Hearst paper had a banner page-one story on the CIA's release of about two months ago, on its interference with some critics. I should have a copy in tomorrow's mail. A ~~reporter~~ reporter for the local a.m. paper called me on this last night, before the high winds hit. He promised me a copy. With all the corruption in Baltimore, including a guy just taped by the FBI in it, a politician, how this becomes a page-one banner story escapes me. Lonnie did not tell me about it, although I think he introduced me to the reporter who wrote it, a young one, son of a senior one.

Now I intend to amuse you. We lost all out tame fish in the long hard and deep freeze. The guy who ~~supplied~~ supplied the golden trout lost most of his earlier- washed out in the summer's flood, a real and a dangerous one. I want not to get fish from public sources so I can refuse to permit fishing. So I tried a goldfish hatchery not too far away. That is what I'm restocking with, at low cost. I've never met or spoken to the owner. But as soon as he heard my name he said "they're listening to you now." When I was in town shopping I went to the place of my friendly plumber to get a short nipple and elbow for the gauge on the swimming-pool filter tank. The owner, who I know, was not there. He has an old timer there when he is away. I left a greeting for the owner and Old Timer said "Ain't you the guy with the geese?" Meaning Geese for Peace, 15 or more years ago. But everyone now says what the fish-hatchery owner said. And I have to say "Don't trust them thar politicians."

Best,