

Dear Historian Howard,

12/17/72

Bitter winter has struck with suddenness and great force. At 11 a.m., in the now bright sun, the temperature is up to 16° while the northwest wind blows at close to 40-50 mph, making a vert low-wind-chill index and my office uninhabitable. In a year and a half I've not been able to get a finish carpenter to complete the work around the air-condition I put in when similar efforts failed. I want a good job because I want it water-proof as well as windproof. I guess I'll have to do it myself and hope for the best. Anyway, this makes the usual kind of work impossible. So, I picked up the life serialization of Margaret Truman's book to read and remembered a note I have wanted to make for some time.

One of my pre-World War II exposes of which I was most proud is of a Philadelphia company. The finished piece appeared about June 1941. It got enormous attention in Washington and a real flood of letters of praise from officialdom, White House, Saint Edgar, members of both houses, several cabinet officers, etc. A real deal.

The company is Rohm and Haas, Plexiglas. Resinous Products is a wholly-owned subsidiary. It was a real Nazi front. I traced its ties, restrictive in terms of US uses of products, to both duPont and British Imperial Chemicals, their equivalent of duPont. Aside from other reprehensible practises, it was part of a clever Nazi espionage system whereby it not only continued to pay royalties through fronts and Switzerland, but in such terms that the Nazis could easily compute all of our military aircraft production, no mean espionage coup.

You'll see the Truman connection.

Now in tracing the directorship of the US corp., I found a man of whom I'd written often as a Wilmington reporter, a society type, horsey, hunter, etc. There is never enough space in a magazine piece for all the fact in a story of any scope, so I was able, without compromise with conscience, to make a deal with this guy before I met with him. I had a friend from high-school days, a guy who suddenly decided that the thing in life is To Get Ahead, who I'd taken to Washington and later introduced to a friend of mine who made this guy's subsequent career, a very decent incompetent with political heft who needed a Bright Young Man to do his work, including his thinking. So, knowing that the man I wanted to interview was on the board of the agency for which the friend my age I'd helped work, I went to him, laid everything out straight and clear, and made my offer: if J. Wirt Willis levelled with me I'd not have space for him in the story. Nor for his son who was an I.G.Farben salesman in Latin America. It was, for Willis, an attractive deal. I expected no more than some confirmation of what I already had and maybe a few intimate details. Nothing essential for the story, which I already had nailed tight or he'd not have seen me. Maybe a little bit on how he got in on the deal and to be a director of the Nazi corp., which began with a patent he used in his main business, leather processing. Such a factory is the closest thing in a city to a ~~kk~~ skunk works. That is where I interviewed Willis, in his Wilmington factory office.

After that I went to Phila to see the corporation's secretary, Staunton Chauncey Kelton, whose office was in Washington Square, near Curtis'. Kelton was a Yankee-trader type, even in looks. He tried to con me, beginning with trivial gifts made a plexiglas. When he got to the nitty-gritty he shook a bit, wound up threatening, but refuted nothing.

So, he started working behind my back. The next thing I knew I was to be at the editor's office at a certain time. I was there. So was a Harry Kalish, of the prestigious firm the Annenberg's used. I think it is now the Dilworth firm, in which Coleman is. Well, they'd had pressure and complaint. Today it is called "prior censorship". The purpose had been obvious, so I laid out a series of photostats to choke even a Philadelphia lawyer, and Kalish was duly impressed and pronounced the whole thing a fine service to a democratic society, a real contribution to the war effort (six months before we were in it) and first-rate journalism of which Walter could be proud (Moe was already in jail). And the piece came out without interference.

As soon as it did Walter started feeling it, as did his wife, from blackballing Main Line society, which embarrassed, and from the America First Chicago banks, which hurt. Really hurt. It meant the end of Click, then the third-largest picture magazine and the only one of which I ever knew that was profitable on circulation alone and had no real advertising staff and not too many ads. By the end of the year the ax had fallen, including the editor's among the lopped heads. The mag did not long survive decimating a good staff and replacing it with docile hacks. So, they used the scare paper for a profitable new venture, Seventeen. I guess their most profitable now is TV Guide. The holding corp for the magazines were Triangle Publications. It now includes Walter's electronic-media holdings, too.

Meanwhile, I went merrily on my expose way, happy to get less than I could have in return for a sympathetic editor (later, as he also learned, chairman and organizer of Eggheads for Ike). There were other similar stories and I branched into political analysis and about 10 weeks before it happened, predicted Pearl Harbor and all the other things the Japanese did with but a single error. I figured they'd hit along the Amur River. On December 8 were there unhappy people at "triangle!" My story had been cut in half. As I remember when it appeared it was two pages, a double-truck. (You can't begin to imagine the amount of detailed work that went into that story then boiled down to two pages, less, much less, with the extensive art work, including a map. Even the Chinese Embassy was helpful, providing rather good, large and detailed maps for me to check out what I wanted to.)

While I was busily engaged in all of this, I took time to go to see Truman. I did. I told him about all of my cartel work, esp. on Rohm & Haas, gave him stuff, and was told I'd hear. I later, not too long later, did.

I think it will give you an insight into the real brainpower behind that rather good investigation he headed to give a few extra details. In later years I came to realize the investigation was as good as it was only because of the great richness of the raw material for it and the national, political need.

I think but I now can't be as sure of all the details as my rattling off of names indicates, that I got a letter from a "liberal" who was counsel, Creekmore Fath, and that I later saw Truman for the details. It may have been Fath only. But what it boiled down to is that Truman would not go into Rohm & Haas because the story wasn't true and the proof of its inaccuracy was that the secretary of the corporation, a Good American, had denied it.

(I digress long enough to record that while I was checking out all the many patents in the files of the patent office I stumbled—quite literally, not from genius, just by blunder—into the most sensational and never-published of all these stories. ~~Exc~~ It was, I think, even too hot for the Justice Department, a better place those days. Thurman Arnold was in charge of the appropriate division, anti-Trust. It was the Standard Oil-I*G. Farben deal on synthetic rubber and synthetic gas, involved a jointly-owned Louisiana corp, Jasco, and was one way—the Nazi's. PM then had a rep for printing anything. I was in NYV working on a story I did on Schering, the US front, for Schering A.G., when I got a call from a Hannah Baker of PM on this Jasco story. I didn't ask how she knew, but it had to be from our DJ or the British agents with whom I worked, named Crowe and Westrupp. They had a House on 35th Street, but this way because it would make a good title or chapter heading. Anyway, even PM wouldn't touch it. I gave my files to DJ and the British. If I find them, they'll be in the envelope in which the British returned them.

Does it give you a measure of Harry Truman and his staff that they would say such a thing? What the hell was the secretary or anyone else to say, that it was true? They got it soon enough anyway, because Justice vested them, took them over for the war when we got into it. Ditto for Schering and something I did on AGFA that I don't now remember and I think a Krupp thing, Krupp-Nirosta, that story done but never printed. I have Justice carbons on everything, working through the man who later wrote The Crooked Judge, Joe Borkin.

It didn't stop there. You eminence Hugh Scott also got into the deal, once the story was out. I got a call from the editor to come up and I drove to Phila. He had a letter from a Congressman I knew from my work on The Silver Shirts, Charlie Kramer of California, a real native Nazi. It was an invitation to appear before his committee and testify to the story. I knew Kramer well enough to know he meant no good, unlike the editor's opinion. He thought he was going to get puffed up. I glanced at the committee list and saw a friend on it, a liberal of his day, John Coffee, of Washington. I'd gotten drunk with John often enough, knew some of the skeletons in his closet and had done him some favors. I could ask one and I did: that he be at that meeting to look out for me. He was there.

(There is a storybook story in John's past. I expect silence on it but I tell it because it is, I think, funny. He was running around with the current Susan B. Anthony, grand-daughter of THE Susan B and fore-runner of today's women's lib. She had a regular boyfriend. While John was there b.f. came. John ducked in a closet. B.f. was real hot and just had to be laid. He was, on the sofa, while John stifled in the closet.)

I knew nothing of Scott, who was very prominently at that meeting. There was also a congressman from Mass., whose botherer I had known slightly. He was the co-sponsor of the Wagner act, Connery. This Connery became a good friend beginning at that hearing. He went into great and needed detail on the magnificent writing I had done and the pleasure he

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got relaxing over a not-indecent girlie kind of magazine whose serious content I provided, save for the arts.

I had intended this for my journal file, but I hadn't intended to expand this much. However, for it and for your education, and because I can't do anything else but read, I'll continue with more detail. Those present:

There was the representative of the law firm representing R & H. He was a friend from the past. The law firm was that of the late Brien McMahon, who was chief of the Criminal Division when I knew him. I lived with him four four months as the representative of the Senate (I'd loved to find those beribboned, embossed credentials prepared for ~~xxxx~~ that Kentucky court!) and as his subject expert. It was a famous case of its day, rather innocuously titled U.S. v Mary Helen et al. Never guess it was against murderers and those who paid them, more than 60 personal and corporate defendants. Mary Helen was the name of the first coal mine in the list of those indicted.) One of the young layers closest to Brien in Kentucky was Walter Gallagher, the guy who showed in the committee offices and said very little (Kramer and Scott saw to it that he had little he had to say).

I had insisted to the editor that he have a lawyer there and he feared getting an Annenberg o.k., so he had a friend and former Harvard classmate who has since, in his own right, earned a fine rep. He was then in OPA. He is now the husband of Jessica Mitford. I last saw them when I was in Calif in 1968. Bob Truehaft. He became a friend and continued to visit us at the farm, until he moved to Calif.

No reporters. Closed, secret meeting.

I think you will recognize from what follows that I had rather young experience with unusual situations and also learned young that the weak survive the strong only by fighting and taking and holding the initiative.

All that saved me was this pre-existing friendship with Coffee, the one I made on the spot with Connery, and my method, vigor. I'd had earlier, similar experience with the UnAmericans, handled essentially the same way, but also publicly. John, fortunately, remembered a line I'd impressed upon him in advance and used it at the right time.

Scott was in a rather bad way. He was a green Congressman, fresh from being Phila D.A., as I remember, and he acted as a prosecutor there. But his life was complicated by the power and the influence of the Annenberg's and their paper. He had to try to get me without hurting or even offending them. This was not very easy and he didn't pull it off. Kramer was irrepressible, irresponsible, rabid and raving. I stuck ^{to} the vigorous pressing of fact, never refuted, and occasional pointed questions so embarrassing to the Committee members who were out for me they had to suppress the transcript, which I suppose was the intent from the first. At the right time I gave John a meaningful look and he turned to Kramer and proclaimed, "Mr. Chairman, I resent his effort to use this committee of the Congress as counsel for a corporation that, from the very obvious record before us, has much to answer for." That did it. Scott and Kramer had gotten enough in the record in self-serving, ex parte statements to pacify R & H and I supposed earn what they got.

No word of any of this ever got public. Few typescripts were made. One got to R & H, which I was told by Borkin excerpted these choice statements and mailed them to its customers as an "answer" to what I'd written. That lasted until Pearl Harbor, when they were taken over.

Let me digress again in a way that may inform you. Schering also was, and fines of \$160,000 were assessed against them. The thing with Schering was educational to me and I've seen recent parallels, if not exact ones. They sent a Nazi Jewish doctor to run the American operation, just before the attack on Poland. He was Dr. Julius Weltzien, and so persuaded a Nazi that he left his family and wealth in Berlin. At all familiar, as a generality? One other thing that might interest you. I traced Schering to The Swiss Bank Corporation and found it had an office in the NYC financial district that sought no depositors and a private elevator which I actually got onto and went to the only place it went, their hidden offices on the upper floors. I was put out as soon as I started asking questions. So, after putting Wil on the Jungsholm for a nice West Indies cruise, I drove to Bloomfield, N.J., to Schering, found only Jewish doctors working there, and got the same question from each, "How can this be a Nazi outfit when a Jew runs it and everyone here is a Jew?" Good but irrelevant question. It was, through two Swiss fronts I found, names contracted to Chefa and Forinvent.

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Those Nazi crumbs really knew their business. One of the sidelines of this operation was psychological warfare. They set up another front, Delta Pharmaceuticals. They printed the name on the ampules so small you had to use a lens to read it. But the label itself was a counterfeit of the Nazi label. So, when they shipped all over the world, esp. to Latin America-wherever the British had the Nazi's blockaded, to doctors as to patients it seemed there was no effectiveness to the effective British blockade. Again I blundered into the this in the office of my Wilmington family doctor, who had some of their hormones.

There was a later, pleasant recollection of this story in San Francisco in early 1967. A dubious type, John Christian, was taking me around. One of the people to whom he took me was and I think still is an executive of the ABC stations there, KGO plus whatever else they have. (It was a trap I sprung on John and his buddy in the deal, a miserable wretch Sam, I think, Banks, I'm sure.) This guy, Lee Raschall, remember Schering. He was a mature man, a respect reporter, with the UP part of what became UPI. They'd assigned him to a Schering series. And he remember that this kid about 25 or so beat his pants off. Considering his greater experience and connections, UP's influence and connections, and that I was working for a magazine with a one-month time lag, that wasn't bad. I was, of course, pleased that Lee remembered after all those years.

At the time I was doing these exposes I also knew and didn't like the woman who later developed the dirtworks for which she became famous as head of the State Dept Passport Office, Francis Knight. She was a wrecker then, in the war agency in which she was in p.r.

I also ghosted stories, for Congressmen, Senators and cabinet officers.

And I developed my own connection, as you can see. I knew politics from the same bottles, chauffeured enough of them around when they couldn't walk, and was brash enough to turn down some pretty attractive honest offers of political employment.

In fact, quite a few speeches were made about me and my work in Congress. I wrote almost all of them and had a standing arrangement to get \$100 each from the magazine. Annenberg would choke if he now knew! Yet I was praised on the floor a dozen times! My old files may have some or all, typescripts or Congressional record of both.

The Annenberg Connection was also an accident, from befriending a fellow reporter from the duPont papers. He got disgusted, so I took him to Washington and helped him get located. He decided to become a court reporter and did. He took the q and a's of the Silvershirter interrogation that led to the incident with the Un-Americans. Well, I didn't know it but he did, a guy with whom I'd worked on the college paper came to town, Izzy told me, I'd just been through this Un-American thing and was close to untouchable (victory isn't everything in political affairs), and I got talking to Marty, and he was production manager of Click, and that is how it began. I became a friend of the editor, took him to Washington later and also got him started, and he is now a millionaire who doesn't talk to me because of the past, he having changed. I had friends through whom, because they were high enough in government, I could and did place able people. But before he changed, this editor bid for me when the Army decided I belonged in OSS. I had many choices, where to berth. I mean including agency heads besides overt politicians. It was a different day. I knew most of my enemies well enough to be on a first-name basis with them. Then as now the real trouble was not enemies, regardless of their power. It was and is friends who are not friends. In any real fight a weak or false friend is the greatest liability. It is always best to have a dependable back backing yours.

The first of these exposes was of Jan Bat'a, the Nazi Czech shoe magnate. It also was an expose of the Sr. Senator Tydings, who FDR tried to purge, and of State, many of whose classified documents I printed in facsimile. He was Bat'a's front and Bat'a located in his home town's suburbs, now called Belcamp, if you notice it from the bus. On the right shortly after it passes Aberdeen, if the bus still goes that way. I still remember the beginning of the lead, "Hitler's onrushing legions were ? miles away..." It is surprising that I could get that story and a speech on it in the Congressional Record because of the attack on the Senator. That just isn't done. More, there are rules against it. A half-Indian half-Finnish Michigan Congressman with whom I was good friends did it. He had a great heart and a small brain, so I helped him often. We also were in the Dies fight together. Frank Hook. Another and then-important friend was Adolph Sabbath, an FDR liberal from Chicago, old enough to be my grandfather, and chairman of the powerful House Rules Committee. He liked my speeches and wanted me to become his speech-writer and Rules committee investigator. I preferred the freedom I really enjoyed. I didn't think of it then, but I'd have been axed as soon as the day of that octogenarian came. He held the longevity record.

I'd intended little more than a memoir on Truman and Fame, the men of the period so many of whom were more than nonentities only because of the evil in them, and I got kind of wound up. When I was having trouble doing anything with Whitewash one of the people I looked up was Muriel Ruckeyser, the poet. I'd last seen her a night that is erased from my recollection, was when it happened, I was that drunk. We were both virtual kids (no offense). It was at an American Labor Party ball/brawl in New York. I remember winding up in her company and nothing more. In the WW days she was Established and writing regular, angry letters to The National Guardian. Neither she nor any other Liberal or Left person would help in any way. The one thing that distinguished her is that she kept saying I had to keep a journal, as most writers do. I never took time, except for a few notes for something I'd planned on the non-publishing history of the first book on the Warren omission, Dick Daring in the Hellbox, or How I Got Rick in Six Months. (A hellbox is the thing in which all old type is thrown in the composing room, to be melted down and re-used. The six-months bit is the wording of a professional editor I consulted after Ivan Obelensky broke our contract while still drooling in the till. She read the ms and said the book-clubs would be fighting for it and in six months I'd be rich and famous. Matter of fact, if the major owner of Pocketbooks was not worried about what the DJ would do to him in a fraud case, over Calories Don't Count, this is exactly what his senior editor said in a different way in about 2/65 or 3/64. He, in fact, went even further. That was a very costly coincident to all of us, especially to me and \$\$\$\$\$. They really flipped, including their P.R. people.)

What I think maybe I've done is tell you a little about what dominates my thinking, working and positions today, this experience of the past. No "critic" has lived through anything like them. Each affair was a survival affair. I haven't begun to enumerate them. Nor did they begin in Washington. We had a Nazi college president whose speeches I reported accurately, a great crime to him because they embarrassed him. I was working for the morning paper in Wilmington while I was still in college. I remember one night the city editor got me into the latrine just in time to avoid His Eminence, the Hitler Lover. It cost me my degree. At the same time I was fighting him on ROTC. Now, your generation didn't invent it. I beat him with his own committee of deans, two of whom knew me well and were friendly, one in particular, the Dean of Agriculture. It was I who did his p.r. work while I covered his school, for the paper. The Dean of Agriculture is in a special political position in each State University, where the legislature is very important. With this kind of past there are many things about which I don't have to stop and think. The thinking was done in the past, where situations are similar enough. Perhaps this can also help you understand why so often I've said brilliance wasn't required to see certain things or to avoid others. I wasn't just saying it or being coy. I'd lived it. This is the liability of today's younger intellectuals, especially those from comfortable backgrounds. (Mine is the era of The Great Depression.)

It was a different kind of life, tho. Different survival problems. I was working for the Senate before I cast my first vote (meaning could), in a job general reserved for mature men. The first Power Structure gangup on me was when I was about your age, after I'd refused a very attractive bribe. I'd have been a millionaire years ago if I'd accepted. That was in about May of 1935x 1936, in Cleveland. By the time I went 30 miles, to Akron, these Forces were at work. (It was from Chrysler, through a Cleveland patron of the arts and a member of the board of whatever they call them in colleges of Western Reserve University.) I was yanked from Akron while investigating Goodyear and their fronts.

We are all the creatures of our life experiences. Mine more than character and personality differences I think are what separate me from most of the "critics" and all the nuts.

I began with Truman. Let me conclude with him, the Wallace aspect. don't make the mistake of thinking Wallace's pros were any different or any better than their counterparts elsewhere in political life. I had dealing with the two closest to him from their Agriculture days (where Wallace launched the first government programs, political persecutions, long before Dies or McCarthy). These were Paul Appleby and Jimmy McCron. If I haven't told you, they both took me to lunch during the campaign to see how I might be able to help it, when he ran with FDE. Their conclusion was hell, we've got the anti-Nazi vote. Tell us how we can get the Nazis. How much more principled can one be? Aside from this, the old Raleigh Hotel served a good lunch, from Wallace's campaign funds.