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12/21/72

Mr. John Lawrence, Bureau Chief
Los Angeles Times
1700 Penna. Ave., NW
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Lawrence,

When it was announced that a subpoena would be issued for your Baldwin tapes, I wrote Mr. Kraslow, not knowing he had moved to the Star. My letter was forwarded to him. He had Joel Volz call me. Volz was coming up here, about an hour's drive, when weather made it inadvisable. He then had another story assigned and has been unable to. I don't know if you or any of your staff read my letter.

In essence, I suggested that you do some of the investigation that has not been done, centering on Hunt and the White House and their relationship and what that in turn involves. It is more than has appeared and makes some of what has appeared wrong.

The major media has avoided using the Freedom of Information Law. In my writing I have not. I have a case in which Sirica was the (outrageous) judge before the court of appeals now. He is little more than a prosecution hack. I have made some FOI requests of the White House. There has been response by Dean to one. In refusing it he confirmed that Hunt was an employee of the White House as of the time of the crimes, that his connection did not end of 3/29/72, as Ken Clawson led the press to believe.

There is much that would make a story and, as best a non-lawyer can have a basis for offering an opinion in legal matters, that can have a bearing on your defense and on the issues involved in the charge and in the defense. This is an exceptional case in which the prosecution is prosecuting itself, in which the government is on trial, and I think in areas not yet indicated in the press.

The demand for the tapes was made by Hunt's counsel. Only part of Hunt's CIA past is known. If I am not mistaken, Hogan & Hartson also has a CIA past, of representation. (One could alleged the same about Rothblatt, who has quite a career of attempting to pin singular responsibility for excesses in Southeast Asia on the Army, as is known. I have private information, not confirmed but from a source in a position to know of other Rothblatt CIA connections, involving a former agent from this area.) Hunt was alleged to be a hired pen of the Mullen agency. He was, in fact, a director and vice president. That agency admits to one CIA connection, coinciding with Hunt's CIA employment: anti-Castro. The account was in the name of Radio Free Cuba. That was part of the Free Cuba Committee, CIA for \$500,000 a year. I suspect more, the reason for one of my unanswered FOI requests, for the Mullen agency's federal accounts. The one involving HEW makes no sense as explained by Bennett. I was in O.S.S., know a bit about the CIA, and it is not unreasonable to assume the possibility of work by Mullen for purposes other than the ostensible reason for the contracts I believe it had.

Hunt's earlier career in CIA included Mexico, where he had a State cover, which may or may not be relevant to the laundering operation in Mexico. The denial of knowing Hunt made for the lawyer in that deal includes the period of his White House employment only. Ogarrio himself has been silent. When Hunt's name first figured in this case, there was an immediate leak of what I believe to be a false identification, that he was an "Eduardo" in the Bay of Pigs operation and that Barker was "Macho". There was no Eduardo in that operation and the only Macho was a priest. Consult the index to Haynes Johnson's The Bay of Pigs. I believe that Hunt was Frank Bender, the man in charge, and Barker was Bernie, his first assistant. Considering what Bender really did, if I am correct, it is incredible first that he would have continued with the CIA and then that he would be allowed inside the White House. He almost started World War III, made policy for the President, and made commitments specifically prohibited.

While still with CIA, Hunt seems to have had a career in domestic intelligence going

to at least 1965, when he had a connection with a literary agency that killed a deal I had made for my first book, one not at all to the liking of the CIA. He maintained this connection for at least four years, during the last part of which he had a drop that was also what amounts to a drop for the "ullen agency, in Washington. I have the proof of this, part of which I have in confidence. It can be reconstructed independently, not in a way that breeches my confidence. Here what I am saying is that nobody has really investigated Hunt. Moreover, he was not severed by "ullen as Bennett announced but continued a connection for months thereafter, if it has ever ended. Bennett, as I presume you know from what has been printed, also served Nixon in the campaign, with Hunt.

It may not be here relevant, but the CIA does use private, commercial agencies for some of its domestic intelligence operations and has established at least one front of its own for this purpose. I have the proof as it relates to surveillance of me. I have a query out for a magazine story on this. (Remember Helms' "trust us" speech?) The proof includes carbons, not xeroxes, of what I said, bills rendered for the service, checks in payment, names on checks, a tape and a transcript of a tape made for me by a former reporter who gagged at what he was doing and quit after giving me his part of the proof. I have a bit of my own on tape.

Despite all these leads to the CIA, I think it was essentially a White House operation. Both, however, might provide a defense for you if you get a trial. I do not know the current situation. It is before daylight, before my morning paper comes. Either or both should be relevant to a proper freedom of the press defense, with the allegation that what Bittman claims is but a cover for another objective, that it is an effort to misuse the judicial process for other purposes. Especially in the context of an analysis of the indictment can a reasonable case be made out that he is a hidden agent of the government. I mean more than in his role as counsel for the former government and White House secret agent. Nobody has analyzed the indictment in print. It makes no reference to the CIA or FBI, and all but one of the defendants were connected with the CIA, that one with the FBI, and at least ~~one~~^{two} others with both. It makes no reference to the \$114,000, referring to less money in McCord's possession and use than has been reported. It makes no reference to the use of Republican National Committee electronics equipment and includes no charge of FCC violation, which seems to be clear enough. It says about as little as one would expect when the prosecutor has to prosecute himself. One of the cute touches is the pretense of including aliases while excluding all that are relevant and can lead to other law violations and federal embarrassment.

I do hope that you and your paper will fight with more than pious statements and pro forma moves in court. I believe that yours is not an isolated case but is part of what to me is a deeply subversive effort at repression, which can't succeed without restraint upon the press. I think I can help. I don't know when this letter will reach you. I'll mail it shortly after daylight, when I will be going into Frederick. I will be going to Bethesda Saturday night, 12/23, for Ian McDonald's (London Times) Xmas party and can go earlier if you or one of your staff would like to talk to me. I know of some of Nelson's excellent work and believe he would understand the workings of the spook mind better than most reporters. I would like to see your paper put him on this alone. I believe the result could be more than a Pulitzer story because I believe the nature and future of our society are at stake. In any event, good luck to all of you!

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

12/4/72 ✓
Mr. Kraslow,

After I wrote the letter I heard a brief item on CBS news to the effect that Judge Sirica is going to admit testimony about the source(s) of the \$114,000. This may have other than the obvious significance and I think it may relate to what I wrote you about.

There is an indictment under which these men are to be tried. The story of the \$114,000 was well if not completely reported. The government elected to suppress this part of what was known in the indictment. I am surprised that the press ignored it. There is a charge that McCord put up a sum I recall as \$1,500, but that is all, even if McCord's own equipment cost more than that.

Airing what has been well reported at the trial will not add to public understanding of the crimes. It will, however, lay a basis for reversing conviction. There was an enormous amount that should have been in the indictment and was not. The matter of the \$114,000 is but one item. And if it really wants to do it the right way, the government can. It need do only what it did in the Barrigan case, get a new indictment. If it fails to and goes into what is not in the indictment, there is the risk of reversal, which would leave an unsolved crime. Double jeopardy.

Going into the \$114,000 and pinning it on sealots will have the effect of isolating these crimes from the White House.

It is interesting that Sirica takes the reported stand. He is the judge who sat on the FOI case I now have before the U.S. Court of Appeals. It has been there for some months after hearing, without decision. His record in it is one of sycophancy the like of which I do not recall looking back on 40 years in and around Washington and watching it with more than usual care and interest. I asked the Department of Justice for a simple, scientific test that involves no secrets and was refused on the spurious ground that it is part of what the law exempts, an investigatory file for law-enforcement purposes. So, my lawyer asked the obvious question, what law is being enforced? There was none, of course. In response, the Assistant United States Attorney, Verdig, said there just has to be some law, human or natural. And on this basis Sirica ruled in favor of the government. This is but one example of Sirica's constituting himself an arm of the government. I think it makes his position in the Watergate indictments the subject of legitimate questioning.

Going back to the indictment, it has other rather glaring omissions. One is the total lack of mention of the official connections of those indicted - and all were spooks. All had histories of working for the CIA, the FBI, or both. There is no mention of either spookery in the indictment. Liddy is the only one, as I recall, without CIA past. Barker and McCord at least had worked for both. Barker and Martinez figured in the FBI's investigation for the Warren Commission. I have the reports. The FBI omitted in what it gave the Commission and reference to Barker's CIA past or to ~~his~~^{his} previous connections with it. The government can be consistent. The indictment makes no reference to the aliases Hunt used in the CIA, those by which he is listed in standard biographical sources. And the alleged Bay of Pigs code names of both Hunt and Barker are not in standard sources, such as Haynes Johnson's The Bay of Pigs. I believe the wrong code names were leaked immediately to hide the fact that they were the two in charge. Think about this as it relates to Hunt in the White House a decade later.

Harold Weisberg