

Dear Les,

Payne

10/16/76

Assuming the accuracy of the report from KPFK it seems reasonable to believe that Lane has changed his story because of what he has been told or asked by those who now know he is a crook. Thus he says he ain't neither a crook, all he was doing ~~was~~ is either helping you or carrying your work forward with your request of approval.

The current issue of Berkeley's insanity, "People and the PURSUIT of Truth" (his caps) has a letter from Lane to Members of the CCI that begins, "In accordance with the wishes of Mrs. Martin Luther King, Jr., and others, I have been investigating the circumstances surrounding the assassination of Dr. King. We have uncovered very substantial evidence and have made it known to Mrs. King" and others. This was before the passage of the resolution. It concludes "These truly significant developments have led us to reconsider our commitment to restrict ourselves ^{as} to an organization to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Thus far, the work that I have done has been on my own and has not involved the CCI." So he is polling the executive committee.

Translated into plain English, he owns it.

But if they like it he'll let them in on all except the property rights he clearly claims at the beginning.

There is a report that his hefty advance, with Gregory, is from Prentiss, which has a not encouraging history on political assassinations. In fact, there are publishing units with the Prentiss name that Jim Lesar connected with CIA fronts and assets when he was doing some Watergate checking for me. I no longer have my copies of this work. I gave it to a student to carry further and have not heard from her since she called to apologize for not completing it because she had been taken ill. However, Jim has it, I'm sure.

If you feel like doing any checking, which I'd like, Prentiss Hall used to be at Eglewood Cliffs but is undoubtedly in the NY phone book. Publishers' Weekly will have any announcement. They have a trade news section.

I do not know whether it is worth trying to save the family and others once close to King from their follies or not. Over the years I've made extensive efforts with them, including this year, first through Jim Lesar, with Harry Wachtel, who used to be the family attorney, whether or not he still is in his retirement. He has Jim's briefs and he knows the reality.

Mrs. King has already played to the FBI's strength with his emotional and unreasoned charge from Africa that the FBI killed King, the same line Lane improvised and perhaps the reason he made that up for Fauntroy and others.

Sorry you can't be with me Wednesday when I'm with Sprague and his assistants, I think separately. I expect to be pretty forthright about all such matters. Whatever the consequences.

Because Bantam had been Gregory's publisher in the past and because the best initial possibilities with a committee starting up is mass paperback at Jim's suggestion I used an unorthodox means of putting them on notice. I offered them a package, the reprint rights to Frame-Up and then the new book when it is completed. Their first response was a non-response, through a senior editor. I responded to it yesterday.

There are two separate and coinciding needs: self-protection and avoidance of doing the job of the baddies.

If I don't get the committee's work that it will cut off from Lane I'll have nothing to do with it. I was explicit enough in the two memos for which I was asked, if I did not mention Lane by name.

I have not mentioned the fink's name. However, with you going away I'd like you to consider letting me use it if I believe it is necessary. I can then lead the committee to the records I consulted and through them to much more on his career. If I did not ask you with regard to them I'd appreciate credentials from you to them for me or for me that I can show to them in the event I want to talk to the former Invaders for the committee. I have no interest in this in my work. I've written way past that. The one thing I might want to do, and it is not essential, is add the fink's name. I've omitted it with an explanation. However, in time it is sure to surface now. It would be better if it surfaced honestly and responsibly. Similarly I have not used Kelley's letter to you in the suit. It would help.

Best,