

Mark Lane and the Assassins committee

HW 2/5/78

Ted Gandolfo called me in a great state of excitement about midnight. He said he had just had (and taped) a phone call from Lane, who is excited and angry and about to pull the plug on the House assassins committee over what Blakey is doing.

Most serious charge seems to be that Blakey gave the CIA proof of CIA involvement. Along with this Lane said that Jack Anderson was given proof of this involvement and was talked out of using it by both the FBI and CIA.

Lane is to confer with Larry Flynt and they are to decide how to go about whatever they do.

Whatever lies behind this, and it is not all factual as I got the story, it steamed Gandolfo up more than I've ever known.

Blakey according to Lane is firing all the good guys on the staff, like Donovan Gay and Robert Lehner. I knew two months ago that both were leaving, so it seems like less than a hasty firing.

There is much more supposed detail. I tried to calm Ted by both questions and suggestions, like before he goes dashing off try to get a second source, that he has known Lane to be wrong before. Questions like how can counsel do this over Member objections, and what about Lane's friendship with Fauntroy and others on the Committee? Does it make sense that he can't reach them, can't quote them?

Ted seemed to remain convinced that the big sellout has become a closed deal and that he must gird himself and battle all. He asked me if he would send me a second tape of his conversation with Lane if I would get it to a reporter. I agreed.

Mixed in with all of this are allegations of CIA operatives among the critics (Lane is still after Fensterwald and is printing a verbatim conversation with him in the Freeop) and that solid researchers have absolute proof of conspiracy the committee/Blakey is ignoring and they can't do anything because of the silence oath. I finally questioned him enough to know that by researchers this time he means the committee's research staff.

There is something odd about the great amount of time and money Lane spends in phone conversations with Ted. Last week he also hired Ted to conduct five interviews in the New York City area in connection with the Flynt award reward offer. He said he'd pay Ted \$100 per interview, that he'd give Ted written questions and that from his great store of personal knowledge could improvise other questions.

Earlier last week Lane told Ted that he is going to expose Bud, Jim, Bob Livingston and me as working for the CIA.

The amount of time Lane is devoting to Ted is not easy to explain. Ted's cable TV show does not reach that many people, etc. Nor does it make sense that Ted had to arrange for Lane to have radio attention for these new charges. (I think also to be aired at a press conference.) Ted said he had arranged for Lane to do a show last night and another today or tonight.

Can Lane be about a cover-the-ass operation, fearing what can kick back on him when the committee files no report? Or a bad one on Ray? Ted earlier last week told me that the committee had turned back to the House some \$400,000.

As of half past 12 it was Ted's intention to work throughout the night dubbing tapes of his conversation with Lane and distributing them.