

Mr. Jerry Ceppos, Executive editor
The San Jose Mercury News
San Jose, CA 95128

Harold Weisberg
7627 Old Receiver Rd.
Frederick, MD 21702
1/20/97

Dear Mr. Ceppos,

Enclosed are a few Wx Post items Kornbluh did not include in his CJR piece.

To make some of it comprehensible I also include a few pages of rough draft of some of my own writing in which I found a few of those things to be material.

Please excuse my typing. It cannot be any better. I'm 83 and in impaired health.

If any of this duplicates what you had in your series, I apologize for wasting that time for you. I did not see your series.

But I hope you keep digging and reporting!

That is what the country-representative society really requires.

I've been working and living with another shibboleth, the JFK assassination. I'm the only one who restrict himself to the official evidence. Not one of my nine books has been reviewed in any major paper. And of all those of whom I have been severely critical, not one has written or phoned to complain about any alleged unfairness or inaccuracy.

Those same papers have had reporters here for days at a time and have had unsupervised and free access to the third of a million pages of once-withheld official records I got by a dozen FOIA lawsuits.

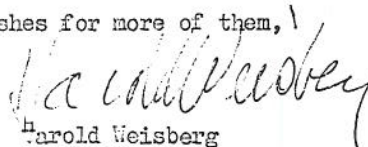
Even when I was Andy Jackson's one determined man and the Congress amended FOIA to open FBI, CIA and similar files ^{to FOIA} and cited one of my lawsuits as requiring that not a paper reported to.

There is no place like Washington for the nonreporting of what in my youthful reportorial days would have been considered news. I illustrate with parts of two pages of a government "response" to my putting myself under oath and swearing that the FBI was filing perjury to avoid compliance with FOIA. The judge accepted that as a "defense" and threatened my lawyer and me!

One ~~judge~~ judge even had me act as the Justice Dept. consultant in one of my lawsuits against it! They did promise to pay me, did not, and that judge even accepted that!

None of the above was ever considered news.

Many thanks for your efforts, and best wishes for more of them,


Harold Weisberg

Costa Rica Considers Seeking Contras Backer in U.S.

2/1/81

By Peter Brennan
Special to The Washington Post

SAN JOSE, Costa Rica, Jan. 31— In a case that could prove embarrassing for both the U.S. and Costa Rican governments, local courts are considering seeking the extradition of John Hull, a supporter of the Nicaraguan contras and alleged CIA operative who fled Costa Rica for his native Indiana last year.

A Costa Rican prosecutor recently recommended that Hull, 69, a dual Costa Rican-U.S. citizen, be charged with first-degree murder for the 1984 bombing at a press conference in a Nicaraguan hamlet called La Penca, located across the San Juan River from Costa Rica.

The bomb, planted by an assassin posing as a journalist, only wounded its intended target, rebel leader Eden Pastora, but killed three journalists and at least one Nicaraguan rebel and wounded dozens. The report identified the assassin as Amac Gall. His whereabouts are unknown.

Based on the first substantive investigation by a Costa Rican agency into the bombing, the report links contras, narcotics traffickers of various nationalities, then-Panamanian strongman Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega, former lieutenant colonel Oliver North, Cuban-American exiles and Costa Rican officials.

Pastora, who won fame in the Sandinista revolution as "Commander Zero," left the Nicaraguan government to mount an insurgency in the early 1980s from Costa Rica.

Prosecutor Jorge Chavarría charged that because Pastora refused to coordinate his forces with contras based in Honduras or to cooperate with drug traffickers using rebel arms pipelines to run cocaine through northern Costa Rica,

roomed—led by Hull and Cuban exile Felipe Vidal Vidal also has not been located.

Costa Rican authorities arrested Hull a year ago on charges of drug trafficking and neutrality violations for his support of the contras. While free on \$36,000 bail, Hull, who had lived in northern Costa Rica for more than 20 years, fled this country, claiming health problems.

The charges of drug trafficking were dropped after Hull fled. This made extradition on the neutrality charge difficult under the 1922 treaty in effect, said local lawyers. But the latest accusation of first-degree murder has brought renewed pressure on the country's highly respected judicial system to seek Hull's extradition.

"I think they have to do it," said Roberto Cruz, a Costa Rican journalist who lost an eye and a leg in the 1984 bombing. "If they don't try to extradite John Hull, Costa Rica won't be a real republic."

Costa Rica's normally conservative newspaper La Nación demanded in an editorial that the courts follow up this case because there is "an imperative need for justice in this crime."

A letter praising the prosecutor's report was sent to Chavarría by the Journalists' Association, the Foreign Journalists' Association and a committee of La Penca victims. The letter encouraged the prosecutor to push for more cooperation from the U.S. judiciary, despite Washington's "negative attitude."

Republican Sen. Richard Lugar of Indiana said here recently that he has heard about the recent charges against Hull, but that extradition "depends on Costa Rica making formal charges."

A local prosecutor in Hull's former Costa Rican province of San Carlos has asked a judge to seek extradition. It will be a long process that could be halted anywhere as it

winds its way through the judiciary and Foreign Ministry before going to the United States.

Once a prominent supporter of the contras, Hull worked with North through courier Robert Owen to construct a rebel force on Nicaragua's southern front. If he were brought back, it could prove embarrassing to officials in both countries.

The report stated that Hull was a CIA operative with close ties to the U.S. Embassy and Costa Rican officials. It quoted testimony that before the La Penca bombing, Hull told a variety of people, including the then-vice minister of police, that there was a "need to eliminate" Pastora.

The night of the 1984 bombing, said the prosecutor, Hull called an associate and ordered him not to offer any help to the victims, according to the report.

During a telephone interview from Indiana, Hull denied the murder charges and charged that the Costa Rican judiciary is full of "communists."

Deane Hinton, who was ambassador here and now is in Panama, called the recent report "an invention."

Chavarría emphasized that the report is a preliminary investigation. A panel of three judges is reviewing the report, which is based on 7,000 documents from, among other places, the tran-contras hearings and related trials and a U.S. Senate subcommittee's investigation into drug trafficking.

The report recommended that 23 persons be charged with neutrality violations, including military trainer Thomas Posey and North's courier, Owen.

North was not charged, but he is officially declared not welcome in Costa Rica, the most stable democracy in Central America.

Last July, a Legislative Assembly commission investigating trafficking recommended that North, arms dealer Richard Secord, former national security adviser John Poindexter, former ambassador Lewis Tambs and former CIA station chief in Costa Rica Joe Fernandez should be declared personae non gratae in Costa Rica.

These five, said the commission were responsible for building the arms network, which because of its cloak of secrecy, allowed traffickers to run cocaine to the United States.

The recent prosecutor's report enlarges the findings of American journalists Martha Honey and Tony Avirgan, who probed the bombing in 1984 and 1985. Hull sued the husband-and-wife investigative team in a Costa Rican court for libel, but lost.

The Christie Institute, a Washington, D.C.-based public law firm, took on the couple's investigation and sued Hull and 28 others over the La Penca bombing.

A Miami judge threw the suit out of court in 1988, a few days before the trial was to begin, declaring it was never proven that Gall was the bomber.

MARY McGRORY

Taming the CIA Beast

McGRORY, From CI

invasion of Cambodia, which of course is no recommendation at Langley, where they still aren't sure we lost Vietnam. Nor is the fact that Lake is quizzical and scholarly and quotes T. S. Eliot.

Lake and the CIA differed radically on Clinton's most clear-cut foreign policy success, the liberation of Haiti. The spooks were busy trashing Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the ousted president—they put out a slanderous profile of him—while Lake was meeting him regularly at the White House to plan his resurrection. When Lake went to Haiti, he received a thunderous welcome from grateful Haitians.

Republicans are laying for him. Outgoing Senate Intelligence Committee Chairman Arlen Specter growls that Lake didn't tell the committee about his knowledge of Iran's secret delivery of arms to Bosnia at a time when the Senate was debating the arms embargo. The more conservative Pete Domenici fumes that Lake was "dumped" on the CIA by a president who wanted him out of the White House but couldn't find another berth for him.

You would think that at a time when money is so tight that the president is considering cutting fuel assistance for the elderly poor by 25 per cent, there might be an interest in downsizing CIA's large budget and bloated work force, particularly in the light of its spotty history, record of

resounding bloopers and the discovery of another spy in the ranks. Like Aldrich Ames, Harold Nicholson was living beyond his means and doubled with the Russians for profit.

The left has been less vocal about Lake's promotion but regret that a good man is going to a bad agency, thereby extending its lease on life. The Republicans are hellbent on chopping, but the idea of offing a \$3 billion Cold War relic is not in the cards. The left is also puzzled by Lake's willingness to take the job. The agency chews up directors who do not please it, and on the Hill, one reliable source says the outcome of Lake's confirmation hearings "depends on what the insiders at Langley say."

The CIA is one organization whose record seems to have little to do with its standing. Just last week at a House subcommittee hearing, the agency was shown to have gotten it all wrong about the chemical weapons in the Gulf War.

Chairman Christopher Shays (R-Conn.) remarked that CIA operatives, when investigating the causes of mysterious illnesses that have plagued so many Gulf War veterans, did not interview a single U.S. serviceman or woman.

But Republicans, and many Democrats are deeply solicitous of the CIA and always giving it the benefit of the doubt. Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan of New York is an honorable exception. He suggested it should be, to employ one of the Company's most

fatuous phrases, "eliminated with extreme prejudice." Congress doesn't dare.

The problem was illustrated during Thanksgiving week, at two congressional hearings on the crack-from-contras story of the San Jose Mercury-News. One had witnesses provided by the Center for International Policy, a Washington research group. The other featured two former contra leaders denying they knew the men giving them large amounts of cash were drug lords.

The witnesses from the Center for International Policy were rather more insightful. Jack Blum, former congressional investigator who developed compelling

evidence of contra involvement in the drug trade for Sen. John Kerry, said the agency should come clean about contacts it had with drug traffickers. Prof. Alfred McCoy of the University of Wisconsin and author of "The Politics of Heroin: CIA Complicity in the Global Drug Trade" was a compelling witness. Back in the 1970s, the CIA tried to stop publication of his book and to get his university to deny him tenure. Luckily nobody caved.

Can Tony Lake tame this beast? Could anybody? Why do we have such a vicious creature, with a mania for secrecy and so fleeting an acquaintance with common sense and democracy? Lake shouldn't be in trouble. The CIA should be.

Pat Mista

MARY McGRORY

Taming the CIA Beast

ALL BUT one of President Clinton's selections for national security Cabinet positions acquired instant inevitability on being announced. Madeleine Albright is a ladylike scrapper who speaks plainly, which is always attractive in a secretary of state. William Cohen, the Republican secretary of defense designate, is a man after Clinton's own heart—likes to have it both ways and talks up a policy storm. Sandy Berger is as comfortable as a national security adviser can be. But his

erstwhile boss Anthony Lake, who is slated for the CIA, has roiled both right and left.

Lake is a rational, civilized and principled man. He is the most high-minded candidate chosen for the job since Jimmy Carter went up the Hill with Ted Sorensen in 1977 and came right back down again, forced to withdraw the nomination. Lake resigned from the Nixon White House over the

See McGRORY, C5, Col. 4

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Received of Interviewed *Wilson, Paul* RECOMMENDATIONSDate 12-4-63

Captain ROBERT KENNETH BROWN, The School Brigade, Fort Benning, Georgia, advised that he has been active in Cuban matters for several years and during the Spring of 1963, in connection with anti-Castro activity, he was in contact with the National States Rights Party in Los Angeles, California.

In connection with this, he contacted Dr. STANLEY L. DRENNAN, 375 Wonderview Drive, North Hollywood, California, who was active in the National States Rights Party. BROWN stated that once while a guest in Dr. DRENNAN's home, DRENNAN stated in general conversation that he could not do it, but what the organization needed was a group of young men to get rid of KENNEDY, the Cabinet and all members of Americans for Democratic Action and maybe 10,000 other people. BROWN stated that he considered the remark as being "crackpot;" however, as DRENNAN continued the conversation, he gained the impression that DRENNAN may have been propositioning him on this matter.

BROWN stated that he is a Reserve Officer and free-lance writer and has been to Cuba several times. He stated that prior to 1960, he was pro-Castro. He stated that he related his conversation with DRENNAN to STEVE WILSON, free-lance writer, Miami, Florida.

BROWN stated that he was again in contact with DRENNAN during the Summer of 1963 and DRENNAN revealed he had been interviewed by the Secret Service concerning his remarks.

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Copy 720 64.1

12-2-63 at Columbus, Georgia File # AT 105-3193

SA CHARLES PAUL ROSE :jkw Date dictated 12-4-63

Document contains neither recommendations nor conclusions of the FBI. It is the property of the FBI and is loaned to agency; it and its contents are not to be distributed outside your agency.

DL 89-43

RJD/ds

Re: DR. STANLEY L. DRENNAN

The following information reflects the basis for investigation reported on page 3 in the report of SA CHARLES S. HARDING dated December 4, 1963, at Atlanta, Georgia, captioned "LEE HARVEY OSWALD; INTERNAL SECURITY - RUSSIA."

CD 1107

AT 89-45.

DL 89-43

CSH/jkw

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JERRY RUSSELL CRADDOCK, graduate student, University of California, Berkeley, California, advised SA MARVIN C. BUCHANAN on November 27, 1963, he contacted one ROBERT BROWN the last week of August, 1963, at Boulder, Colorado. BROWN was described as being anti-Castro formerly a free-lance correspondent in Cuba and believed to belong to some anti-Castro organization. BROWN stated that, while in California raising funds for anti-Castro activities, a physician or dentist contacted him and told BROWN he was in the process of attempting to recruit an assassin for President KENNEDY.

On November 28, 1963, Special Agent KENNETH BRIDENSTINE determined that ROBERT KENNETH BROWN, a Captain in the U. S. Army Reserves, was at that time attending Infantry Officers Advanced Associate Course, Fort Benning Georgia.

It is obvious, as Kornbluh says, that "the mainstream press" did, "inexplicably," abandon the contra/drug story that was "significant." It was "back on the national agenda where it ~~belongs~~ belongs" and which it should never have left.

The "mainstream press" was negligent on this. It "faces a challenge in the contra-cocaine matter," of "restoring its credibility in the face of public distrust over its perceived role in the handling" of the contra-cocaine matter.

The Post's ombudsman, Geneva Overholser, was faithful to ~~the~~ ^{its} record in lamenting that it and the other papers "showed more energy ~~in~~ from protecting the CIA from someone else's journalistic excesses."

Whether there were in the Mercury News series "journalistic excesses" remains to be seen as, if and when it does, the rest of the story comes out.

Overholser might not have been so free with her allegation of "journalistic excesses" if she had consulted the Post's own files on this subject. If she had she ^{February 1, 1990 dispatch} would have seen the ~~report~~ of Post reporter Peter Brennan, from San Jose, ~~Costa~~ [†] Rico. The Post headlined it, "Costa Rica considers Seeking Contras Backer in U.S."

The "Contra backer" was John Hull. He was reported to be CIA. He had a spread in Costa Rica near Nicaragua that, as this story does not say, was used by CIA planes servicing the Contras. He had an air strip on it. Hull fled Costa Rica when he was charged with first degree murder in the 1984 bombing at La Penca. That bomb was "planted by an assassin posing as a journalist." The bomb did not kill its intended victim, Eden Pastora, who broke with the CIA-supported Contras. ~~Hull~~ ^{Hull} had also been charged with drug trafficking.

"mendacious"
Kornbluh referred to Oliver North's "insistence" that "no U.S. government official, which among others North was, "ever tolerated drug smuggling as part of the contra war:"

incident -
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space

... a prominent supporter of the contras, Hull worked with North through courier Robert Owen to construct a rebel force on Nicaragua's southern front. If he were brought back, it could prove embarrassing to officials in both countries.

The report stated that Hull was a CIA operative with close ties to the U.S. Embassy and Costa Rican officials.

Brennan also reported that

*Widest
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Based on the first substantive investigation by a Costa Rican agency into the bombing, the report links contras, narcotics traffickers of various nationalities, then-Panamanian strongman Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega, former lieutenant colonel Oliver North, Cuban-American exiles and Costa Rican officials.

Hull fled the country.

The Costa Rican prosecutor, Jorge Chavarria, used, among other things, some "7,000 documents from the...Iran-Contra hearings and related trial ~~index~~ and a U.S. Senate subcommittee's investigation into drug trafficking."

Chavarria's report

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~~The report~~ recommended that 23 persons be charged with neutrality violations, including military trainer Thomas Posey and North's courier, Owen.

North was not charged, but he is officially declared not welcome in Costa Rica, the most stable democracy in Central America.

Q
A

Charging someone in the "oagan White House would not have been politcally wise.

Brennan continues:

*Widest
single
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Last July, a Legislative Assembly commission investigating trafficking recommended that North, arms dealer Richard Secord, former national security adviser John Poin-dexter, former ambassador Lewis Tambs and former CIA station chief in Costa Rica Joe Fernandez should be declared personae non gratae in Costa Rica.

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70

So, it was more than the prosecutor and more than North in the Reagan White House. Those named, according to the Costa Rican commission, "were responsible for building the arms network which, because of its cloak of secrecy, allowed drug traffickers to run cocaine to the United States."

This ~~from~~ⁱⁿ the Post and almost ~~se~~^{seven} years before its ombudsman referred to a later story along the same lines as "excessive journalism."

Hull had worked with North through [his] courier Robert Owen." The Iran-Contra hearings include Owen's testimony in which he compares George Washington's patriotism ^{implied} favorably with Oliver North's.

There was something to which Owen testified that was entirely ~~is~~^{was} ignored by the media, including the Post. ~~That was~~^{it} was that North sent Owen to Colorado to get advice from Robert Brown.

Robert Kenneth Brown had operated Palladin Press in Colorado. ~~He~~^{He} provided all the literature gun nuts and those who later called themselves "militia" could use. Later he left Palladin and started the magazine, Soldier of Fortune. When I knew ^{in the 1970s} him (that is what he regarded himself as being). In fact, he wanted me to ghostwrite a book critical of the CIA from that perspective. I declined.

Brown got into the Warren Commission's files on the assassination of President Kennedy after he was positioned "to get rid of KENNEDY, the Cabinet and all members of Americans for Democratic Action and maybe 10,000 other people." Patriot that Brown is, and he was then a Captain ⁱⁿ Army reserves, he did not trouble the FBI with the information he had been "propositioned" on such a deal.

The FBI learned and reported ~~to~~^{it} to the Commission when a graduate student, ~~xxx~~^{xxx} Jerry Russell Craddock, told the FBI after the ^{assassination} investigation.

The army was not a bit troubled. ~~It~~^{It} promoted Brown from captain to major.

Had the Iran-Contra committed the slightest check, if it had asked the FBI for its records on Brown after Owen testified that Oliver North sent him to see Brown, it would have learned this and much more. Seemingly the FBI did not volunteer its information of Brown and his other activities.

From this one of several stories it is clear that except for the California angle ~~and~~ the Post had in essence published what it criticized the Mercury News for publishing and had let that story die. The Brennan story does more than involve only the contras only in ~~the~~ dealing in drugs inside the United States. It also involves all those named "officials" North denied ever considered any such thing. North is one of those named.

That the Times in New York, the Times in Los Angeles and the Post in Washington all ganged up in ~~assaulting~~ "assaulting" The Mercury News does not mean that the ~~editors~~ editors of these three probably most influential papers in the country got together and decided that they would all do as they did. That they did not have to conspire and did it without ~~conspiring~~ conspiring reflects their ~~independ~~ simultaneous and independent decisions that they would defend the CIA against the charges that they themselves had published earlier but with fewer details and without that California crack angle.

That this was spontaneous is more significant than if it had been after conferring and reaching a joint decision to do what they did.

If false charge charges are published against any agency it is proper for the media to correct errors and to publish what refutes falsity. But this story both Timeses and the Post had already published except for the California angle. They had published the essence and then abandoned the story, important as it was for the truth to be established and given to the people. Forgetting what they had published, not getting those stories they had published from their files, all three papers decided to defend the CIA without ~~was~~ consulting the existing record and without any effort to carry any investigation forward.

This is not the role for which our Founding Fathers assured the media would be free of government intrusions.

This is not the role of the media if representatives society is to work as intended by our Founding Fathers.

It was the role of the media in those societies we opposed, Hitler's and

Plaintiff's attorney was advised by correspondence prior to filing of this action that the Atomic Energy Commission (now Energy Research and Development Administration) provided technical

identifying the scope of plaintiff's request. Defendants attach representatives of the F.B.I. for the purpose of specifically

On March 14, 1975, plaintiff and his attorney met with

connection with said investigation.

as well as any tests made by the Atomic Energy Commission in

investigation into the assassination of President John F. Kennedy,

by the F.B.I. for the Warren Commission in connection with the

disclosure of the spectrographic analyses and other tests made

Freedom of Information Act, as amended, 5 U.S.C. 552, seeking

On February 19, 1975, plaintiff filed this suit under the

DEFENDANTS' OPPOSITION TO PLAINTIFF'S
MOTIONS TO STRIKE, TO COMPEL ANSWERS
TO INTERROGATORIES, FOR PRODUCTION OF
DOCUMENTS, AND RESPONSE TO MOTION TO
POSTPONE CALENDAR CALL AND STAY ALL
FURTHER PROCEEDINGS

HAROLD WEISBERG,
Plaintiff
-v-
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE,
et al.,
Defendants

Civil Action No. 75-226

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

7-20

been given and to thereby resolve the matter amicably. Subsequent to the calendar call, counsel for defendants was served with plaintiff's motion to strike the Kily affidavit on grounds, inter alia, of bad faith, and other discovery-related motions calculated to probe behind defendants' assertions of good faith compliance with plaintiff's Freedom of Information Act request. Plaintiff alleges in his motion to strike and attached affidavit that the Kily affidavit is deliberately deceptive, not based upon personal knowledge, and should have been made by Special Agent Robert A. Frazier who plaintiff believes is still an active agent with the F.B.I. laboratory. Defendants respectfully inform counsel and the Court, however, that Special Agent Robert A. Frazier retired from the F.B.I. on April 11, 1975 after thirty-three years, ten months and three days service, and that supervisory Special Agent Kily is the most knowledgeable active service Special Agent to give this testimony on behalf of the F.B.I.

In the motion to strike (pp. 2-3), plaintiff also alleges the existence of certain documents which he claims have not been provided by the F.B.I. In a sense, plaintiff could make such claims ad infinitum since he is perhaps more familiar with events surrounding the investigation of President Kennedy's assassination than anyone now employed by the F.B.I. However, in a final attempt to comply in good faith with plaintiff's request, a still