

2/7/70

Dear Gary,

Out of deference to Paul's feelings, his desire to be detached from Lifton and the other unpleasant aspects of our work, I said less about Thornley and his coming case than I would have in writing what I wanted to send both of you. He, meaning either as an individual or as a result of the office talking it over, seems to think there is little doubt the Thornley defense will be the Lifton invention. I hope he is right. While I find excitement hard to take--any excitement--which is a relatively new thing for me, I think I'd like that, for it would provide an excellent forum for exactly the opposite, which is the truth. What really happened, as I believe I must have told you, begins with a big lie in Brener's book, with Layton Martens seeking me out to cop a plea for him and my refusing to talk to him without the okay of his lawyer, while I was interviewing Barbara, and was followed by asking Boisel, who happened to phone to say he was nearby, to take Barbara home for me and my asking him to stop at Clint Bolton's, with Barbara to introduce me, to try and get him interested in my belief that, from what I knew alone (in O in NO), Garrison's interest in KT was inevitable, that it was possible KT did not understand the significance of knowledge he possessed, and that I'd be glad to talk to him because I thought I would. I went further and said that because KT was a writer, the literary value of anything that evolved would remain his. First of all, I was right. Second of all, I soon left town and the KT indictment followed before I returned and without any correspondence or phone contact. And Bolton's own writing, published, substantiates this. But I believe that if KT does pull anything like this I would be (and would want to be) a rebuttal witness, and I think, in that event, the door would be opened to some interesting testimony. So, while today I tend to avoid that which I might find exciting, this I think I'd like. Paul is not aware, I think, of the virulence of some of his friends. What Lifton has done is so wholeheartedly, so undilutedly evil; it should be exposed, and publicly, and in a manner that would get around. Like to Mary. I will not ask her to tell me his secret, which I suspect is some kind of theft, if not just crap she might go for (she has not commented on my response to her hypothesis).

When I awakened at my once-customary early hour this a.m., I decided not to go back to sleep. I had no special work in mind. We have to get an early start to Washington for the last of a series of -il's dental appointments, finishing up work on replacing an inlay, and my ~~xxxxxx~~ semi-annual checkup. I have this special purpose in writing: I know you are hungup with work, and this is not to pressure you. But I think it important that things not hang over me now. I want, very much, to get COUP behind me, published or not. I also want very much to return to the autopsy writing. If I have not gotten your corrections and suggestions soon unless you find something really awful I'll not pay any attention to it because when I get back onto the autopsy, I will want to concentrate on it and finish it up. I'll have to begin with the rereading of the two books (so suggestions on them will be quite welcome) completed and then read the rather large file I have for the third. Then I can do the writing. Without having really thought it through, I think, in the light of my newer material, I'll shift things around, making three into two. I took the Burkley stuff out of PM to include in II and decided that the DC trial should be the last part. Now, however, I think I'll change the order. Also, we should, if Bud gets with it, soon be tied up with law things that should take much of my time but can offer major opportunities, unless the country has gone as far down that more fascist road as seems possible.

These nervous problems are new to me and I've never studied them in the past, but I have a notion that devoting too much time to some things may be wrong, that seeming to progress, if only in the production of temporarily unpublishable work, is a constructive approach because it tends to diminish the oppressive feeling of futility and because it brings new things into the mind. I think that one of the oppressive things now is the disinterest of those who should be enormously interested in COUP, for the most immediate and selfish interest. And knowing the good effects of the DC trial, which I alone bulled through, probably the second step in what brought on this business, I look forward to a similar opportunity, even if we can never expect as fair-minded a judge again.

Please don't forget when you read COUP, that I'd like you to note the places in part I where I use then then-current "Negro" where today it should be "black". These will take little time to correct, for the space is the same. The easiest way for both of us is for you to use a ruler and measure down from the top of the top line. I can use an identical copy and translate to the master. This is true of all corrections.

Meanwhile, there is the chance that I've turned on some people who may be able to help and, I think, are willing. I expect a couple this weekend. I think this would be good medicine, if it happens. Further, there is a small publisher who seems interested in an abridged book. I know he'd be interested under his own terms, from what he's said. They do not interest me for a number of reasons. I want at least a limited edition of the complete work and my minimum condition for the book must include this. He may well stop on that. However, I've had my own experiences with publishers, and they tell me that if he doesn't cut enough into it to have to work to get it back he'll do nothing with it. I am not interested in indulging my vanity, for settling on a book that can be allowed to die, like O in NO. And I also am interested in a full record being available. The man in this house was due back from an extensive absence on personal business, settling his father's estate, day before yesterday. If they have a real interest and are willing to consider my terms, I should be hearing from them soon.

I presume you've had no response from Matt. I have heard nothing further from Vince. When you read COUP II you'll immediately spot one thing I would have liked for Matt to check out for me. Despairing of this, and other avenues having failed, and not being able to trust the obvious ones, I've just made another effort, through someone unknown to the rest of us but dependable if he'll do it. That Vince would not use the phonebook for me is meaningful to me and, I think, should give you a reading on the state of his mind. However, I have now been able to accomplish that by other means and my message got through to Bevel, who sent back the message that he both wants to see me and thinks he may have things for me. At this juncture, unless I can include them in the appendix, they are out. Repegging the book is just too much work. Lil hasn't been able to do any indexing for a while, she is that busy at work (bringing it home at night and not being able to do our own tax things). She is up to about 475 and it simply is not possible to redo any of that...I wish I could understand how much of what is bothering me is the abdication of friends. Vince and Matt are not the only ones, and when it can happen to two such ordinarily decent and concerned men, is it not discouraging?...I wish also I could evaluate whether or not the Lifton-Fred et al business plays any significant role in this. Without such things, we have enough personal and financial problems to account for it. I would guess the intensity of my past six years alone also could...And I think that with me, if not with most, lack of understanding may also be an adverse factor. Once I understand things, once I am satisfied I know what is involved, at least in the past I've been able to cope with things. I recognize we wear with age and abuse, but I feel, somehow, that my own lack of understanding may cause some of the apprehension....

Caught LBJ on LBJ last night. It was a delight! What seasoned ham! I have had no response from CBS for my requests for transcripts, but I do expect to get them through others.

I expect Jerry and Trent next weekend. Jerry is doing well, has gotten a driver's license, and plans to hire a car. I have urged him to have Trent's girlfriend do the driving. The Jersey Turnpike is hardly a place to get driving experience.

As with my writing, my letters sometimes contain just snatches. I want to call to your attention what I barely mentioned to Moo: how did my informant know accurately that the investigation of the Cuban camps was taken away from the locals and handled out of Baton Rouge, even to the right name of the man in charge? None of us knew this—not even that there had been a state investigation. I read this as one of the significant signs. The mystery how she knew remains, but not the fact that she knew the truth, and she alone knew it....But this mystery will remain. There is nothing I can do about it and we are out of contact, especially now, with criminal charges pending. I wonder only why they have been pending so long—for more than a year...If I gave you one guess on who the lawyer is, you should be able to get it first time! Which may or may not be another mystery. Perhaps if I had your background, I'd have been able to handle this better than I may have.

While I'm taking the time this a.m., when you get a chance, please bring me up to date on Patsy. Did that WDSU film ever turn up? There is a sequence we should have had blown up. His failure to do it (or my failure to recall it) led me to believe there may have been something in the original of which I recently wrote that is not in the copy. Noteso. This is the sequence with Lawrence and Palmisano, with Neeley. If he has relocated film, they are framed toward the middle, with a briefcase also providing a good identification, and I think also rolls of paper, like blueprints.

Do you have a Spring vacation? If you do, can you save up enough to fly here on a student's special rate? We'd like it, and I think it would be good for me.

When you read COUP (all), you may think those who have befriended you may have enough interest in the content to facilitate printing it. This is just an idea that popped into my mind, without basis. However, if you do believe this is possible, I have no objection to your showing it to them. If the wealthy Jews do not soon interest themselves, they will also soon regret it. Those with any real political intelligence should already be apprehensive. Beginning with Fortes.

Paul can also supply you with "finished" copies of the two PMs. I think I gave you NCR copies. You need not but extra copies for me if you want these. I think you should have them, for if you find anything in them you can then give me a meaningful reference. Come to think of it, I do not believe I got the benefit of Paul's comments on them. But I can't trust my memory on this. I have excerpted Wecht's testimony for the appendix to III. The government has failed to make available their side. I think I'll just paraphrase it with copies of the letters I wrote asking for it.

Well, it is time to start getting ready to go to DC. If Bud is home and awake, I'll see what his reaction, if any, is to my last Rolapp letter and the one I wrote him about it. I think it has enormous potential, enough for a separate and immediate suit that should galvanize the remaining JFK-RFK men, assuming the reaction is still possible...I may also tell him what he didn't tell me, that he is going to try and see the baddie's bad brother behind my back, in violation of our initial agreement, which required my presence. This kind of thing, which I am old enough to anticipate, always bothers me. Best regards,