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Dear Mr. Babcock,

I do not presume that your interest is much greater than is required by a review, or that George Lardner's does (I'm sending him a copy of this letter), but because you report on intelligence matters I write you about two sentences in your review and to tell you a story that I think is relevant.

"Still, the research is compelling, backed up by devastating on-the-record quotes from more than 30 former intelligence officers" and "He could have addressed whether any of the spy hunter's machinations mattered."

I believe these two sentences are related in ways not easily perceived by any reviewer but can lead to what I regard as a hell of a story.

Also, I'm surprised that in your thinking, for which I'm aware you may not have had much time, you did not wonder how it is that some 30 former intelligence officers would dare speak so freely, without worry about their employment contracts.

When Mangold was first getting started on his book he phoned me from London with what perhaps incorrectly I felt was some excitement. He asked me if I would help him with what he described as a biography of Angleton. I told him I would.

Before carrying this farther, you noted that what began as a biography evolved into something else. Something similar happened with a book by one of Mangold's sources, Ed Epstein. His book that appeared as "Legend" did not begin that way from the ads in Publisher's Weekly. It changed radically after Angleton started "helping" him.

Mangold told me he wanted me to know where he is coming from, so he was sending me three books he'd written. I told him that was not necessary but he insisted he wanted to. He also told me that he'd be here soon and would look me up.

I began immediately to collect for him copies of what I believed he'd find useful and to segregate FOIA records too voluminous for me to copy for him. Time passed and I got no books and heard nothing from him. So, I wrote and explained that I'm aging, unwell and did not want to waste any of what time I have left and would like to know whether he wanted the help he'd asked for. I got no reply and finally, cramped as my working space is, I put what I'd copied for him away and filed the FOIA records. I did wonder why his behavior was, from my experience with them, unlike my experiences with a number of other British reporters. And, of course, why he wanted the help he knew I could provide and then fell silent.

On reading his book I no longer wondered. As soon as I finished the book I wrote him. I do not expect an answer but until he has had time to respond I think it would be unfair to send you a copy. I do tell you, however, that I addressed him as "Faust".

Because I have special interests of which George is aware I read such books critically and annotate them, sometimes for a history professor who is a friend and asks it of me. I'm doing that now, for example, with Beschloss' remarkably dishonest "The Crisis Years."

What your review does not reflect your perceiving - and please do not take this as criticism because I have no such intent - is that the planned biography evolved into the serving of a special interest, as Epstein's book also did. Epstein's served Angleton's interest. I presume this was not lost on the CIA. As Mangold's book appeared it is as much an exculpation of the CIA as an institution as is possible.

Even when from time to time he appears to be critical of Helms, he falls far short of including what is relevant and is in the public domain about Helms. There is a considerable volume of what is not generally known about Helms that he could easily have gotten and not from me alone.

This gets to whether Angleton's machinations could have mattered. Helms was involved in some that are of special interest to me.

I do not remember Mangold's exact words but he wrote that Nosenko had told the FBI that the KGB did not suspect Oswald as a "sleeper" agent. The exact opposite is the truth.

Mangold cites Warren Commission 651 and the HSCA's record. He does not cite what his assistant Goldberg at least knew about, my publication in 1975 of what Nosenko had actually said about this and more about Oswald that Mangold omits: that he was openly anti-Soviet in the USSR. What Oswald's political beliefs really were I picked up from what the Commission and the FBI chose to ignore. I quote his writings in my first book. He referred to the Soviets as fat, stinking politicians and to the US CP as betrayers of the working class. With regard to both of these matters I call to your attention that when the CIA finally gave Nosenko a fair and unprejudiced polygraph it concluded that he had told the truth about Oswald.

Under Angleton, largely as I recall by Rocca and when needed strongly fortified by Helms in person, the CIA pressured the Commission not to take in the secret like testimony Nosenko offered, on the ground his bona fides had not been established. That was the judgement the Commission should have made but with some secret pressure, reflected in the executive session transcripts I have from Ford in particular, it decided to abdicate to the CIA and it even omitted Nosenko's published identification from its Report.

There is much that relates to this for which I do not take your time. But I do call to your attention that Mangold has to have known, as Jeff Goldberg did know, that I'd published six books on the JFK assassination and have about a quarter of a million pages of formerly withheld records gotten by a series of FOIA suits, that Mangold did phone me and ask for help, that Goldberg and Mangold's lawyer know me, and that he never asked for anything from me or for access to these records. Including those on Nosenko.

The Commission's second panic - the first was FBI leaking that boxed it in - was what Ford described as a "dirty rumor" without any investigation, that Oswald had had some kind of government connection. I published two of the executive session transcripts on this, the first, which they decided to destroy and overlooked the stenotypists tape they had to have transcribed for me, 1/21/64, in "Post Mortem" beginning on page 475 and the second the subject of Whitewash IV and printed in facsimile in it.

Mangold reports that the CIA believed that Oswald had been dispatched to disinform on the JFK assassination, so that the KGB would not be suspected. Superficially this appears to be legitimate but to anyone with knowledge of the available information, it has no validity at all. What would be the official conclusions were leaked beginning with publication 12/2/63 and the whole world knew, including the KGB. And, of course, the CIA.

At two points, without reporting the subject matter of my FOIA lawsuit, Mangold has notes quoting what the CIA's Charles Briggs attested. It was my suit for the Nosenko transcript. Mangold omits, and I think it is not unfair to say suppresses, what Briggs also attested to, that the Nosenko transcript had to be kept secret because Nosenko's treatment by the CIA was so wonderful that the CIA expected it to attract additional defectors! Mangold cannot have cited that affidavit without having read this in it.

There is more in the disclosed and available CIA records that is relevant. That Mangold omits. In particular the questions it proposed that State address to the government of the USSR. They were so outrageous State had a fit. They were assured to offend. They also resulted in the U.S. government failing to request what it knew from Nosenko did exist, the KGB's records on Oswald in the USSR. This includes their suspicion that he was some kind of U.S. agent, was anti-Soviet openly, possibly why they suspected him and what would I am confident gives the lie to another seemingly reasonable CIA reason for not trusting Nosenko, that he said the KGB did not interview Oswald. It didn't but the MVD did. Moreover, it got all it wanted from the KGB Intourist guide, confirmed in effect by a later defector who was trusted: the KGB did not trust Oswald and considered him more or less flakey.

With Golitsyn so important a figure in Mangold's book and Angleton, of course, Mangold also does not mention the instant analysis of the JFK assassination by an unidentified KGB defector, clearly Golitsyn, and utterly irrational and extremely inflamatory.

So, while what the man I regard as Faust did publish is important information, I think it can be compared with Colby and the family jewels, as serving the CIA's interest to have the air seem to be cleared when it wasn't.

The net effect is to hold the dead Angleton alone responsible for the institutional misconduct. Mangold's book is as close an approximation of exculpation of the institution as I think is possible.

Also missing, considering the influence Angleton had, is that fact that as I learned when I was in OSS, one of our greater intelligence failures was of what Angleton was in

charge of, counterintelligence in Italy. It was so thoroughly penetrated the Nazis picked up team after team when they got behind Nazi lines. Such records passed through my hands.

I do not suggest that it has meaning but I do not recall that in reporting Angleton's friendship with Ezra Pound, in Italy when Angleton was there because he'd moved there, Mangold referred to the fact that Pound was friendly with the fascists and approved them and as I recall engaged in anti-U.S. propaganda for them during World War II. There was some consideration of charging him as a traitor.

I find it at the least provocative that not just Angleton and his staff but the CIA to the top bent such effort to keep the Warren Commission from listening to Nosenko and succeeded after the Commission knew what he would say, that none of those records were printed in the 10,000,000 words the Commission did print -not even a hint that they existed - and that initially they were all withheld at the Archives.

I also find it interesting that in his treatment of Oswald Mangold makes no reference to the fact that Helms admitted to HSCA that the CIA had a considerable volume of pre-assassination records on Oswald that had just happened to disappear without a trace.

And, of course, that it still has not complied with my 1975 request for its Nosenko information, repeated several times. Apparently at the CIA's bidding the FBI also did (not comply) until it started disclosing them to someone who was known to follow what I refer to as the party line on Nosenko. I then got copies of only what was disclosed to him. It made a mistake once and addressed me using his name.

If I were writing the book Mangold wrote and had none of the complications I believe he had I'd have found those records to be exceptionally important. From the first and with a series of never reasonable explanations people in the CIA were determined to prevent Nosenko's defection when his position and what he could know about Oswald was known. He was in the right place to know and of a rank that made it likely.

In any event, I think that Mangold's sudden lack of interest in having access to what he had to know I have when he phoned me is explained by his book: he preferred other sources he would not have had if he had had any relationship with me.

This gets back to how those 30 dared speak to him without fear of violating their CIA employment contract that it has so often sued to enforce.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg