

11/12/77

Mr. George Lardner
Newsroom
Washington Post
1150 15 St., NW
Wash., D.C. 20005

Dear George,

I believe you asked me about the convention or meeting of the Southern Historical Association at New Orleans. I've just heard from a professor friend who was there.

Lane did not show. He cooked up a pretty demeaning excuse. Fabricated is closer.

He and his had tried to rig it to promote him. But it did not work out that way.

You will get a copy of the prepared speech that surmounted Mark's sick ego. I asked Dr. Wrone to make a copy and send it to you when he sends one to me. Wrone send Mark a copy in advance, a proper professorial courtesy if not as direct a challenge as man is capable of.

In the extremely remote event that Mark could have made satisfactory response to whatever Wrone said there await Mark an extraordinarily fine and as bright a young man named Howard Roffman. Howard, about whom I confess prejudice, was the windup speaker. Not bad for one of about 25 when the academic world boast so many respectables. What young Howard would have done to Mark our selfless expatriate Washingtonian of such lofty principle would not in his least rational moment dare.

Either of the two would have been holy water to the vampire.

Both are responsible people. Wrone is the pre-eminent bibliographer of political assassination, the only one who is really solid. He detests the irresponsibles in the field.

You have heard Lane hold forth on how he doesn't make a penny out of this and how all his work is to inform people entirely unselfishly. You even reported it without a second source. (You might check the recorder of deeds records and see who owns his building.)

When some months ago he was still looking for these appearances and was promoting his book Code Name Toro he agreed to address the historical association without fare or fee because it never pays either to anyone, not being structured to be able to.

He received Wrone's speech some time ago. He waited until a day or two before the meeting to phone or wire and ask where his ticket and honorarium were. He then declined to appear on the ground his fare and honorarium were not being paid.

He was invited by three historians all of whom give the same account of his agreeing to appear when they could not pay him. Because he did not show up the scholars made a report on his agreement to present with his refusal and the alleged reason for it. I know Wrone's command of the literature so I can guess that he had a thoroughly accurate and documented speech.

I've told you all along that despite his airs Lane's color is yellow, that he will appear with a captive audience or a set-up but not with a real adversary. And that he lucks through an awful lot, like no coverage in this case.

Sincerely,