

7/15/73

Dear Barry,

The enclosed carbon of my appeal under the Freedom of Information law to Archibald Cox is for your information, not for a story.

Prior to this refusal, my personal view of Cox was roughly that von Hoffman expressed in a recent column. That explained his selection to me. This merely confirms it. In its own way, his concept of his role is not much less authoritarian than Nixon's is of his.

But taken with other recent developments, not the least of which is John Mitchell's self-casting in the function of lightning rod, it fills me with apprehension.

Today's Post reports that Cox is loading his staff with lawyers. To the average person this may seem appropriate for a special prosecutor. However, what this case needs is investigators experienced in the kind of investigation required. All federal investigative agencies are in this case compromised, as the story also indicates. If there is any indication that Cox has or will engage a single one, I am unaware of it. So, what the hell is he going to take to court, case law?

My own experience with lawyers as investigators is extensive, personal and extends back to the 30s. They are notoriously bad investigators. I know of no law school with even a single course in investigations.

Lawyers are as notoriously disinterested in anything smacking of malpractice as doctors. In this case virtually every possible or potential defendant is a lawyer. Cox's personal record in this area von Hoffman addressed rather well, I think.

Now comes Joe Kraft to tell us that Cox "is uniquely equipped to do the job," in today's Post. In my view, whether or not he is suited, he is unequipped except with money.

I am not complicated by indebtedness to sources, which is not an accusation. So, I can look at all agencies with suspicion. I am suspicious that Mitchell was called in advance of Ehrlichman by the Senate committee. Once Ehrlichman teed off on Mitchell on camera as he seems to have in private, Mitchell's position would have been different or at least much more difficult. Moreover, if this did not occur to the committee, it was suggested to it by a lawyer in my presence. It shifted its schedule for Moore, but not for the possibility of opening Mitchell up more? I have been a Mitchell-watcher because he prevented my getting public information. There is much in his record that was appropriate to his questioning. Nothing in his record outside Watergate was referred to. Here the departure is from the lawyer's norm.

Hunt's book fascinates me. I have gone through about a third of it. Without so intending he has effectively ended most of the fictions about the Bay of Pigs, including the one on which the Post and the N.Y. Times were gulled. To this point I have seen several things that I will follow in my own way. I don't know whether the others will interest you.

Not related to Watergate is his statement that Drescher (Droller to Schlesinger in 1000 Days, beginning p. 230) got his name "Frank Bender" from the Bender Building. If true, I wonder why? Could he have had a previous connection with it or an office in it? "Droller" is not indexed in Schlesinger. Hunt says he met with Schlesinger, but neither Hunt nor "Eduardo" is indexed and I remember neither from the long treatment. Hunt's self-portrait as an incompetent escaped him and his editors of similar political perspective. With some of his (unjustified) cracks at Schlesinger, I think it is possible that if Schlesinger knows him, he might say something. Schlesinger avoids naming the CIA operative who knocked the Cuban heads at the Skyways Motel in Miami to form the Cuban Revolutionary Council (beginning about p. 243). I haven't gotten far enough to know if Hunt says he is the one.



Not suggesting that it need mean anything but on the off chance that in the future you may want to know it, let me report a few of the connections of the names of these Hunt-connected groups with the investigation of the JFK assassination, the government's and mine.

Oswald used the former address of the CRC on his New Orleans literature, hardly a pro-Castro Act. The FBI never stopped withholding this from the Warren Commission. Ultimately, it got the proof from the Secret Service. The FBI also dissembled about this address and other occupants, one of whom had been Chicago SAIC. I brought this to light in my fourth book. David Ferrie also used that address. Ferrie was the subject of at least two FBI reports I have that were withheld from the Commission, one in connection with the allegation of running arms to Cuba, the other in connection with his role in the Frente in New Orleans. (If you did not read the galleys, the Frente people were Hunt's pals. It was part of CRC, which was to be the government in exile in Hunt's scheme.) Ditto for Ferrie's young friend and homosexual apartment-mate, Layton Martens, later indicted by Garrison for perjury (he did commit it and asked me to help him cop a plea, but Garrison dropped the case). Martens was also a Frente functionary, although then a kid. Oswald's notebook has the name of the CRC head in New Orleans in it, disguised by a common device with him, a simple misspelling. The FBI transcription hides it further, as does its "interview with him, a mere six typed lines. This man, Frank Bartes, later flew planes in the Congo for the CIA. In the late spring of 1968 he told me he was still under "Washington protection." An FBI agent Warren deBrueys attended Frente meetings in New Orleans, with Ferrie, and never mentioned it in his reports. Instead he tried to hassle the witness, whose testimony was inhibited by the right-wing Commission lawyer, Wesley Liebeler. The CRC was subsidized by the CIA through April 1963. All its (and the Frente's) political activity in the New Orleans areas was under Hunt, from what Hunt says of his own role. Some of these people, friends of General Walker and Billy James Hargis, later surfaced in Cuban-Americans for Nixon-Agnew in the 1968 campaign, with others of the same political colour. One in particular helped fix the "red" label on Oswald, who was an anti-Communist, despite appearances.

Hunt is incomplete in areas where no need was served, as in hiding in his book what his own Who's Who listings show. (I gave Don Woodward copies of these and a tabulation made from them.) One of these items is his assignment to Montevideo. I would imagine the then ambassador might say more about Hunt than Szulc's Sunday piece had.

Hunt's limited references to his second Mexican career provide enough leads for learning much, especially with police cooperation. "Sam" should be easily identified and from Hunt's account, should be quite willing to talk about Hunt. And we was well known there prior to his 1960 return. He had spent two years there with a State cover.

To the point I've reached, there seems to be a pattern in Hunt's use of names. Those he doesn't like he does name, usually fully. Those he likes among his fellow spooks he does not. Miami should be crawling with his enemies, like the Ray people. Given what he says about Ray, they also might have a few interesting recollections. If Hunt's past were to be of interest. One of those Hunt likes is Rivero, of Diario de la Marina. I exposed or helped expose, I'm not now sure which, the paper's and the owners' Nazi connections, back in 1941, in a magazine piece. (For Walter Annenberg!)

If you want to try to tap anti-anti-Castro sources in Mexico, Cedric Belfrage should be able to direct you. He is at Apartado 630, Cuernavaca Morales. (To my knowledge he is not a Communist, by the way.) He may be able to refer you to Mexico City reporters who may be able to tap police sources. I don't know.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg