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JDW: Hinckle/Ramparts

12/21/74 HW

I'm hoping you'll have a brief period like I'm having, not long enough to do work requiring continuity of time, for a few minutes of recollection of the past. It is a subject that long has fascinated me that I'll come to while I'm catching my breath still and cooling off from carrying up a load of long limbs for cutting. By the time I finish this it will be mail time, and when I go out for it, back with another load. How's that for efficiency?

For such moments I accumulate unread clips, etc. I have just finished Geismar's review of Hinckle's book in UR 1/75. Geismar avoids what interests me most, and I think the reason is lack of comprehension. He also treats just plain dishonesties that approach if in fact they were not fraud as no more than principled "madness." Even the attempt to flimflam an emotionally ill patient through Fromm is "hilarious." This is to say that while what can be called Ramparts' accomplishments he reports faithfully, he also avoids some of the sinister, whether from ignorance of not I can't say.

My own documentation of the unprincipled and unethical you know. It is not new and it is as persisting a characteristic as muckraking. Brilliant Hinckle is. Also a common crook, with money and with the work of others.

Geismar finds Ramparts' investigation of President Kennedy's assassination" to be fascinating; some "Hinckle has written only now."

Well, I know something about that, Hinckle's part in it, his deviousness and outright lying in recounting it, and it was a disaster that regardless of its intent could not have been a more perfect working of the Department of Disinformation, beginning with the most brilliant spoof I can remember.

If we ignore intent and consider what ends were or could have been served, deal with fact only, then on this and what I am really writing about, I think many other stories, a different Ramparts emerges.

My question boils down to this: can you recall any make Ramparts operation that you can honestly say did not serve some spook or spook faction interest - at the time it appeared? Even exposures of the CIA itself?

I believe it is possible to theorize that a faction of the CIA - perhaps even its top - wanted to end the dangerous NSA situation. The story then was that they didn't ever want to do it and did it only because nobody else was. This can be credible. And nobody was really hurt by it except a couple of reporters perhaps.

By the time they were exposing Vietnam, CIA policy and attitude had changed, as the Pentagon papers established. No big deal there and doing what was done through Ramparts was effective and least likely to be suspected as of spook inspiration.

Illustrations of this kind tend to make more conspicuous what Ramparts did where spook interest lay in the opposite direction. They were the major single drain on Garrison's funds, the major single misdirector of effort, such as he was capable of (and why then knew?), and without possibility of doubt conned him into a spook trap. They refused to print solid information and to the best of my recollection never once did, the closest I can recall being Lifton's rewrite job, carefully filtered and angled as it was.

So, reminded of this continuing doubt I have entertained since 1965 or 1966 and more than I could add, if you have time to think it through I'd appreciate your thoughts. I never did see it regularly and thus also there can be much of which I'm not aware.

