

Dear Jim, CIA/WxPost/Covering Up

HW 3/6/74

Something has been troubling and about which I cannot speak definitively I record now, in haste, because of my concern over the defects in the first of the new wave in indictments and such reactions as that of Joe Kraft, of which a separate memo enclosed. I won't have time for a complete itemization but the Post's refusal to use good, solidly-documented newsworthy stories that related to CIA should be in your mind as you think about this. Off the top, particularly all those good stories on Hunt and the clear proof of CIA perjury that it printed without putting together. Most recently on WG, doing no more than correcting the Baker leak, that Hunt was working domestically for LBJ when the correction lead inevitably to an entirely different kind of entirely illegal domestic CIA domestic-intelligence operation and of the most subversive kind, political.

Let me go back, to the time my Senator, then Congressman, read the Whitewash ms. and went to the Post in person to actually demand that they read it. Files will show. I believe he then spoke to Al Friendly. This was in the summer of 1965, when Mac was recovering from major surgery. (After reading the ms and when he had to go back for a patch job, he made a black joke, did he dare trust himself to the Naval Hospital?)

Friendly asked that I ask which of a few chapters they have read. I said read all or what you care. I went in with the ribbon copy only because it was easiest to read, the copy I obviously needed for publishers, was introduced to Larry Stern, then a national desk reporter (I don't think then chief) and he was to read it. For months I heard nothing. Finally, needing it back, I asked for it. It was not that easy. The way I finally got it was by driving Larry from his office all the way out 14th Street to near the Maryland line, where he lived. In going through it when I got it back I found his marks. He had read to end the 47th of the triple-spaced pages. Some reading, huh? Well, what did the job the next year, when the printing process had started, was an indignant editorial over the plight of Russian writers. I wrote Friendly a short, indignant note about the casting of notes and it started all over again. I then added bait, a few FBI reports. The one that did it was a few pages from OD1, the FBI's initial and definitive report that in all five volumes failed to mention all the President's known wounds and all the ~~shots~~ known to have been fired. The pages in facsimile in WW. At the end.

They, including Ben Bradlee, turned on. Instead of Stern, who may by then have been chief of the national desk, the book was assigned to Dan Kurzman. He read it in a week. I saw him intermittently and saw his excitement, which he also articulated. The morning after he finished it I had coffee with him and Stern in the Post's cafeteria and they told me they would make a test. Stern knew and respected as a good-guy/decent man Howard Willens, then still in Justice. You may remember he was the Commission's staff director. Would I give them some questions? I sat down at a Post typewriter and gave them a single sheet in outline form, again off the top of the head. No preparation. They told me when they would return and I was there when they did and Stern told me candidly that Willens had no satisfactory answers to anything. Separately Kurzman told me, "You're in." Maybe also "big." He was clearly excited. There was a deal they were going to use this book in a major story. My proposal was not that but an offer of syndication rights. As we went to the cafeteria that morning Kurzman raved over the book, then printed. He said it read like a non-fiction detective story, a common reporter's comment.

And suddenly things started happening. The first was the disappearance of Kurzman, who had read the book. He was given a year of sabbatical that turned out to be consolation for being fired. (His replacement was already there, in the next desk, Dick Harwood. Dan was an investigative reporter, a good one and a CIA specialist. The rumor around the Post is that he was offered over a fine series he did exposing the Dominican affair of 1965.)

Harwood got the assignment and an impossible deadline because it required checking through the 26. He then also jumped the release date on Inquest and converted the story to one on Inquest. It was a clear doublecross. If the Post's top didn't dislike me for the book it did for my protests, which reached Wiggins, then ex. ed., via Louis Herren, who phoned Wiggins. Promises made all broken.

During what must have been a very hard week for him I saw Harwood intermittently and saw clearly enough the way he was going. I undertook to steer him straight. He took it as arguing a cause. In all of this he dropped one cookie I remember, "How could there have been anything wrong when Kenny O'Donnell invited Ben Bradlee to see the autopsy?" My reply was, "Did he?" Not until Bishop appeared did I learn what Bradlee did instead, stayed with Jackie at the 17th-floor wake instead.

Some time later, after seeing Larry intermittently, I told him I had learned what Bradlee would have learned if he had gone to the room, got one of his typically acid comments, and have pretty much stayed away from him since. He is very bright and can be caustic at will. It comes naturally and why reduce things to a fight?

He also has gone up fast. Today he is a junior executive who writes think pieces and a few special articles. Harwood went to national editor then to national managing editor.

Under this combination there has been a distinct lack of interest in exposing anything about the CIA except, as best I can recall, within the narrow confines similar to what I have attributed to Ted Sule, what can be said to serve the interest of the liberal wing of the CIA. What has not been used and what was available is a considerable amount.

This can be traced back to "Olson's" one public speech as DCI, the one in which he pleaded to the ASNE in Washington, Trust us. We don't target on Americans. Also not recalled when in the Baker/Hunt correction the Post printed that it had targeted on candidates for President.

It is a consistent Post position, except for that Kurzman deviation. Go back to the Bay of Pigs and its suppression of the evidence it had and the whole world had and had printed except for US papers. (Times ditto and Daniel would not give me full text of his speech of confession.)

The foregoing is a comment on my recollection. I can't take time to build a documentation. It has been clear to me and long on my mind.

In assessing it you should recall that to begin with, when the reporting was good, the WG story was by accident on the local side, to which national staffers were added as needed, with Woodward and Bernstein remaining on it, as the national desk gradually took it over. The character of the reporting also changed gradually. My first observation on this was of the Post's seeming machismo. That was inadequate as I look back.

You have ample documentation of the things I told W & B and they did nothing about, all leading to CIA and its covered domestic activities, all solidly all documented before I spoke to them. Woodward made several promises of things he would do and never did. Carl even failed to get a clerical employee to provide the city directory pages from the city directory so he could do this same thing on his own, without my violating confidence. You should remember the articulated Woodward refusal to even take the Hunt tape on which he complained that CIA would not let him get Castro assassinated.

There is this clear pattern, with major stories still not told, all CIA stories and all leading to CIA WG criminality. It is too overwhelming, dealing with too many stories all of one character to consider accidental or mere arbitrariness on some desk. Then there is the national desk's killing of the Jaworski story after Susman sent Hanrahana here and I gave John the fat file, the copy machine and the paper for it, and went after Lil. He copied 40 pages, paid me for them, wrote the story, and it has never appeared. In connection with the Kraft memo this to me has even more significance. What John got was a good and for the day a significant story. Failure to use it has considerable meaning now. Whether or not conspiratorial, the effect is clear. When there were overt signs of CIA involvement and when he was a former CIA conduit and contributor to its foundations from his own funds, this was news when he became special prosecutor. The Post did not use it or the UPI story for which I was responsible through Art Kevin, a separate file.

Another story ignored, the CIA lawyers in the WG cases. Another, those of the Commission, the largest common denominator. Quite a few of them, Jenner most strategically placed today.

I'd have liked to go into this more and to correct but it is time to awaken Lil and I am still physically weary from a hard siege for me, all the digging and now the beginning of the regrading after having to replace the footvalve at the bottom of the well. It just fell off and we had no water for four days except what I carried in. With no visible wellpit had to dig to locate the pipe then follow it to the hidden pit. While most was done with a back-