

Dear Js,

12/17/73

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Time was when getting snowed in merely meant I could work without interruption by papers and mail. Today it will be different because I'm at an age where I'm not about to shovel out 500 feet of lane and because Lil will be upset over not being able to get to her office. As best I can see at 5 a.m. we are socked in. And listening to the local radio for an hour, a special kind of personal abuse, has told me, in a half hour of this suffering, only that the energy crisis requires that we not use the phones because they take energy, so just assume that everything is closed! The caterwauling called music is bad enough, but to hear only that the cutting room of the local clothing factory will be closed, etc., three like this and not even how much snow has fallen or how the rural roads are! And on the half-hour they are reading wire copy on Kissinger and delivery-men's strikes-elsewhere. They've even gone to the trouble of taping and replaying net coverage on a possible airlines strike....We come a long way in radio public service locally!

Anyway, it leaves me a bit uneasy, so I can't settle down to work. Ordinarily I can't wait to finish shaving and brewing the coffee to get to it.

Suppose some of the uneasiness is because of the possibility power lines can go down. One of the first improvement I made when we moved in was to put the service from the pole to our home underground, so that is not my concern. It is sleet on the lines in these mountains.

Anyway, I did have another purpose as I use the time when I don't feel like writing for other things. I have ordered Szulc's Compulsive Spy because I think I should read it as soon as possible. This made me think that I had not asked anyone to check his listings in Contemporary Authors. So, when you are at the library and if you then have the time, if you would compare them over the years and get me a copy of any that might be of interest I would appreciate it.

There seems to be inconsistency between the book and his mag. piece on when and where he first met Hunt(s). His first account is impossible from his Who's Who.

In reviewing some of this stuff a week or so ago, it suddenly became apparent to me that Mullen left Time-Life and went to work for ECA at just the time Hunt went to work for ECA, 1948, which could have been the beginning of CIA work for both, ECA then having been one of the more common CIA covers. Then, later, Hunt goes to work for Mullen and meanwhile, Mullen has done CIA work, at least before Bay Pigs and on Cuba. Tends to shape up like a package in which any detail can be important. Szulc should have details in a biography. And in his opening statement, carried nowhere, Hunt did say that two of the Mullen people had CIA connections when he went to work there. I think I've isolated the second, but establishing it is not easy. Warl Minderman, who spent much time in Mexico City in an office in Padeo de la Reforma. That is probably the local equivalent of Rockefeller Center. It also is the location of a lawyer and a bank of some interest.

I understand that Szulc says that Hunt was Mexico City station chief in the 50s and that he just happened to be there again in the fall of 1963 when LHO also was. In his NY Review piece, by the way, Vidal draws on Hunt's galleys, not the printed book. I checked the book, which Lesar bought, and found the footnotes not included. You may recall my notes on the footnotes. This article leads me to believe that Szulc was in touch with the CTIA people but not Lesar because what he draws upon of the Warren material and esp. the unpublished FBI reports is limited to their knowledge of both and their predisposition toward Popkin's revision (from False Oswald into Second Oswald). There are other relevant reports I did not give them when the WG story broke and Vidal shows no awareness of them. If he was not in touch with both, it was probably Smith or Popkin. I think that Lesar will be writing Vidal soon if he hasn't already. He was impressed with that piece, as he should have been. And Vidal has a thing going with Buckley. At the 1968 convention, I think it was, he called Buckley a fascist and Buckley called him a fag.

I had intended taking in Lowenstein on Buckley's TV show last night but Lil was talking to her sister so I didn't turn the TV on, which would have disturbed Lil and impaired her ability to hear. I suppose someone I know will have heard, in the event Buckley disclosed anything other than an attitude.

Disappointed with what Kessler did with Nixon and money. I turned him on to this long ago and he spent much time without adding anything of real worth. Best,

HW