

13 May 1973

Dear Harold:

The attached LA Times item on Connally's appointment appeared routine until we belatedly noticed the rather far out ideas in the second column. Can't decide whether "White House lobbyists" refers to WH wheels working on the Hill or to assorted industry vice presidents hanging around the WH, but assume the former.

In any case, whether a trial balloon or a wild speculation built into a story, it reflects the continuing shortage of manpower willing to be associated with disaster. The idea of tying Kissinger to a desk is, of course, preposterous.

This, however, is not the focus of our interest. It set us to thinking about this strange fascination Connally seems to hold for our GL. Of course, anyone willing to say hello to the GL must be a beautiful sight these days, especially when he comes from the Democratic side of the fence, but this is a continuing thing that has been going on some time. Somehow the accepted explanations are not satisfactory -- that Nixon admires him for his flair and looks and his possession of many attributes our GL does not have. Since when has our GL made a habit of drooling over such attributes in others? It seems here that Connally is a conspicuous exception in this category.

There has to be an explanation, or at least another aspect to the total explanation, and it has occurred to certain local evil minds that this might be another example of a factor we have postulated as explaining our GL's unvarying protective behavior regarding Haldeman and Ehrlichman: they know too much and cannot easily be junked. Applying this line of thought to Connally, what could he know that could influence our GL to woo and win him as he never has laid suit to anyone else? Well, he was governor of Texas, and as such could have picked up considerable information at the time which he never had occasion to remember in public. He also was caught in the fire and has every reason to remember it and whatever he thinks caused it. Certainly, as governor, he was in as good a position as any Democrat could be to know what Nixon was doing in Dallas on Nov. 21, and he also could know enough that, regardless of how routine that visit was, it could be made to look otherwise. Is this another barrell over which a crool fate has draped our GL? Is Big John that smart? We know he's that ruthless, of course. How much does he know about a certain widowed jailbird and his crew of willing immigrants that have been working as a team, apparently, since the Bof P? Is this part of a personality that our GL finds ~~irresistible~~ irresistible?

While these questions are asked merely in theory, they are not put idly. Our GL is much weakened, easier to blackmail than ever before. Even Betty Beale ~~found~~ found courage to write today that he shows his age, his shoulders are more stooped, and his bounce quickly fades. Cornered. Perhaps Art Buchwald should bug another of GL's conversations with God.

On another subject, we were talking today about how much influence your efforts must have had on this whole situation. We know the people to whom you gave tips appeared to ignore or evade them at the time. In some cases, I'm sure, much against their own inclinations, but they all have problems of editors and editors have problems with publishers and readers. Nevertheless, we feel sure that your total impact was tremendous and probably critical at many points, providing yet another factor in the total accumulation that led to decisions that were right, and in any case creating a subconscious climate where more questions were asked than otherwise would have been the case. It may well be doubted if we'd be where we are today if you had not tried so hard and so courageously. Best  
Best