

25 January 1974

Dear Harold:

This is a sort of add-coincidences memo which probably will convince you (if you need any convincing) that I have turned irretrievably paranoid. Well, it's not quite that bad, but if there has been any utility at all in my concentrating on the darker side of things I might as well continue at it.

Your reassuring reasoning as to causation, in the cases of both the government and the publisher, are logical and persuasive, and I find no flaw in them. However, I learned long ago from the Chinese (during the Japanese occupation, so they were not doing a job on me, whom they regarded as a friend) that more than one coincidence pointing toward a desirable end must be kept in mind as possibly suspicious. Basically, this is a Taoist idea. The central belief of Taoism is that the universe represents a balance of contending forces and dynamics, and that the least unbalance in any sector will make itself felt, somewhere, some time. In other words, the old Western idea that all effects have causes. The lesson to be drawn from it in most cases is that one cannot understand any effect completely without knowing ALL its causes. Therefore, reserve judgment until there's reasonable assurance that all causes are known and understood, together with how they have interreacted to produce a specific effect.

This of course collides with Occam's razor, a typically Western idea to the effect that the simplest explanation of any phenomenon is to be preferred. That's all very well, but it assumes one knows ALL about what caused the phenomenon.

Your tentative conclusions as to the motives of the authors of both sets of coincidences mentioned above are well and closely reasoned in terms of what you can extrapolate from what you know. So far, so good, but lend an ear to Lao Tze, who I think would point out that this does not mean there may ~~be nothing else cooking~~ be nothing else cooking.

Shortly after writing to you last on this subject, I thought I detected two further sets of coincidences, neither of which you may agree on but which I think I'd better note here.

First is the matter of the waif, who had neglected you rather pointedly until you sent your Christmas greeting and even then did not respond until after she had had some sort of contact with her old mentor. Then she sends you a violently worded communication recounting an encounter with a dike and so on and so on. In the meantime the bean pot approach had failed with you. Don't you think this is all just a bit fortuitous? I readily concede that the story is entirely plausible, but what would you expect, something ~~implausible~~ implausible? No, you'd expect a good job, and that's what you got. The ten-dollar donation is a tear-jerking bit that I find difficult to believe. And the conflict with the dike is the very latest in fashionable experiences for the caged. You scarcely could be expected to settle for less. And so on. I say be careful.

Second is the rather large number of new orders for old books you've been getting. Here again this is well done, if you want to look at ~~this way~~ that way. No doubt some of these are, as you indicate you believe, entirely genuine. But even one such genuine one could have suggested to anyone interested that here was one more way to tap your thinking and sound out your intentions.

Looked at in this light, the use of the antiquated address is an excellent cover, so good that I have difficulty imagining a better one for anyone who wanted to get a whole series of people to write to you and to test your response in various ways -- not just what you say in reply but how promptly and seriously you respond in any way.

I don't know what the object might be, if there is one, but offhand I cannot help remarking that whether designedly or not, a number of developments have combined to do two things -- to give you at least some relief from your chronic insecurities and at the same time to whet your curiosity along certain lines and avenues, and also encourage you to discuss your work and possibly your plans. I don't think it's illogical to ~~XXXXXXXX~~ infer that someone wants to know more precisely about you than may be the case, and that one approach being used is to disarm your natural caution and suspicion. I don't think this has been accomplished, and well understand your determination to do what you can within the circumstances in which you find yourself. This is what I would hope to encourage, especially if it is accompanied by redoubled vigilance in examining everything that comes along in terms of what it COULD mean in addition to what it says or seems to say. This isn't paranoia, just simple common sense, the kind you've been using all along and which you don't need me to remind you of. The fact that I do remind you reflects more my feeling that the least I can do is to present you with another viewpoint, however presumptuous it may appear..

Best,



jdw

26 Jan -- I think it's also worth at least a footnote to point out something you've no doubt pondered a good deal: how some of the earlier coverup cast keep appearing in the current crusade. Ford, JAWORSKI, Jenner, Ball, and there even was that talk after Ford was confirmed that Specter would replace Buzhardt as chief WH counsel. Ever hear what happened to that? It just faded, and they hired St. Clair instead. Perhaps someone realized there could be too much of a good thing?

In any case, there is a certain expertise, experience, point of view and so on common to all these, and it may be assumed they represent something resembling a norm when it comes to an attitude toward you. I don't think we are the only ones who assume connections among coverups. There are connections of purpose and motives if not in actual techniques employed, and we no doubt are seeing only the tip of the iceberg. Brrrrr.

