

Dear Jim,

1/6/80

Your speculation is more persuasive than the UBI version of the Hougán Harper's piece, of which I'd not even heard until I received the copy from you. I'd ~~like~~ like to read the original, in part because I wonder if Hougán is up to more than ~~xxx~~ irresponsible journalism.

I believe that motive is a dependable means of analysis in the absence of fact but that the most credible analysis based on motive can be wiped out by fact. I'm still somewhat tired from yesterday's exertions with the snow and want to catch up on mail and get back to another battle of the affidavits today so I won't go as much into detail as I'd like.

You have no factual error. Hougán is overloaded with it. Another example is that it was not McCord who was responsible for the cross-the-street lookout at the Howard Johnson motel. It was Baldwin, the former FBI SA from Conn.

In assessing possible CIA motive it is necessary to split it into before and after. Before it was all for Nixon, so much so that it willingly assented to what Hoover opposed successfully, as in the Huston plan.

While I have no reason to believe that the CIA was involved in the Watergate planning or execution it was heavily involved by at least indirection in ways I have researched fairly fully, through Hunt and Mullen in particular. I'm satisfied that there was a CIA/Post deal for the aftermath and know that Mullen was a ~~prime~~ prime Woodward source. Recently I gave this a test, although testing was not my purpose. After the Post's serialization of the Woodward/Armstrong Brethren and after reading what it has about the efforts against Douglas I phoned the Post and left word for Woodward that I have much on this which has not been published and he is welcome to it. He has not returned my call. He was in but in conference when I phoned.

The Post's objective was more restricted than the praises it received for its reporting indicates. Its limited purpose was to get rid of that great liability and greater danger, Diablo, aka Nixon. The CIA's was to restrict what would be reported, to keep as much as possible from its door. Both succeeded. Neither went a step farther. I was aware of this contemporaneously, as you may recall from my notes and memos relating to Woodward and Bernstein.

The Senate's WG committee, regardless of the desires of any Member, were similarly restricted. Baker really covered up rather than expose in his minority report.

There really were no CIA victims. Helms, who would have had to go in any event, came out of it fine save that Iranian developments must have wrecked his new business. The Colby effort was overdue and necessary. It is not what has hurt CIA morale. Rather is it that the CIA disallowed all alternatives. The Angletonians survived and grew powerful not on achievement but by exploitation of the world's beliefs, which were most extreme and paranoid with them. They would have had to go in any event. Likewise had the time for dirty tricks, all counterproductive when they succeeded, long passed. (You'd never know it now but it remains true.)

McCord was a true believer. His hobby was compiling a blacklist, of those who would be confined without due process in an emergency, all those whose views were to the left of John Birchers'. I am without doubt that he loved the CIA as sons love fathers. But his GOP acts were consistent with his personal beliefs.

What is not easy to comprehend is the totality of professional incompetence that characterizes these people. What they did and got away with all sneaks, by and large, get away with. The odds were better in their case because they had power behind them. They were really careless. I see it all the time. It is incredible that the spooks would file overtly perjurious affidavits and lie as consistently as they do to courts, depending on what to now they've had, immunity. They do this over the least consequential matters. The latest is a vindictive effort to beat me out of costs in an

FOUA case. Why should they run these risks and go to considerable trouble and expense in an effort to beat me out of a few hundred dollars? But they do and have and at last word were even considering a second Motion to Reconsider to the appeals court. (Which I prayed they'd be stupid enough to do.) In a last night's phone call Jerry McKnight confirmed my estimate of the affidavit I prepared in response to their false one. I left nothing but the spelling disproved. I'm hope that the judge has finally had a belly full.

Visualize a Hunt and ~~his~~ his career of success in the CIA, and Helms so taken with Hunt's palpy puffs of the CIA that he had his novels in his office. Or an Angleton able to dominate as long as he did. There was nothing but a succession of intelligence disasters under these people, the greater disasters being those that went accord to plan - did not overtly fail. They survived only on the power of the government, the mystiques they fathered and fostered and the services they rendered those who kept them going. Plus on cold war fears. Look back and evaluate and you'll see I am right on this. They were always the most professional incompetent, succeeding in such ploys as the Khrushchev denunciation of Stalin only when someone else wanted them to, had his own ax to grind.

This is no less true of the FBI, as my examination of so many thousands of pages leaves without doubt. Utter incompetence except for co-existing with the bureaucracy in DC and its requirements. The FBI was competent only in keeping out of serious trouble. It wasn't in any other field, area or endeavor.

The bigger and richer it got the more crime flourished. I don't recall a single case of advancement based on competence or performance outside the bureaucratic game.

While it can be argued that those who executed the breakins were pretty much limited to the Cuban stupidities they used, who in his right mind would have trusted a Fiorini or Barker for more than daring? Who could believe that a Barker would be equipped with a very expensive ~~trans~~ transceiver and would let himself be dominated by either the pennies batteries cost or the possibility of noise when he could for pennies have had an earphone and that would not have let any noise escape? But if he'd used the equipment he carried they'd not have been caught.

You are correct on the tape, it had to be the way McCord used it. But why use tape at all? A steel pin would have jammed the lock and been invisible. The use of such simple devices was not unknown within the spookeries.

Hougan serves an unseen master, seeks cheap fame or a fast buck but has not done substantial work or even thought his case out well. It requires that McCord want to destroy himself when he could have accomplished the Hougan end without harm to himself by merely getting "sick" at the last minute and squealing on the others. (He didn't blow it over principle, only when he saw that he was being victimized and in an effort to ease his won burden.)

On the Lane story and suit and the split with Garry, all of this provides a real opportunity to do something long overdue about Lane. I wish one of those involved was ~~as~~ of a disposition to make the effort, that I'm sure could and would succeed now. The Javers account of the Freed involvement can't be accurate, that Freed would not do the book. For fame or money he'd do anything. His own account, to a friend of mine, is more credible: that he horned Lane, his close pal, in on the deal. Freed was to do the book, Lane to milk Jones.

Time for Lil to get up and for me to see if it is safe to go out for the paper and then farthur, to see if my little tractor is ready to come home. I no soon, with great help from neighbor Paul, got the snow blade on than the regulatory shorted out. The blade is valueless for a real snow but could have pushed the slush I had to push yesterday and is a little much for me. However, I did it alone, eben when I had help, to get the exercise. A strapping college frehsman who has been a friend since his high school days, was here when I went out for the second assault than finished the job. He offered to do it but we continued talking while I did it. Thanks and best, *Heard*