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CC: S. Trahern ✓

[REDACTED]
Lacey, Washington 98503
November 1, 1990

NOV 19 ANS'D

Mr. Bryan Lamb
C-Span
400 Capital St. NW #155
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mr. Lamb:

Enclosed is more information about John Hull. As I read about Rep. McCollum I begin to realize why you Beltway types are so ignorant about this subject.

If a program involving John Hall might reveal an unacceptable number of bodies, perhaps you might at least consider a program about RICO. I don't think the average person has any appreciation of how essential this legislation is for the prosecution of white collar crime, and I feel white collar crime affects far more of us than the bloody stuff of the headlines.

I'm 68 years old--somehow I suspect I'm not going to live long enough for you to find a journalist who has even heard of John Hall. Isn't it strange that so many of your listeners find them.

Very sincerely,

[REDACTED]
PS: I felt sorry for you when Dr. Adler expressed his approval of Socialism. It was wonderful of you to have him.

enc.

Iran-contra lives

Though the rest of the country may have sidelined Iran-contra when the Gipper left Washington, in the middle of Florida the scandal is still kicking. Two North-connected figures are battling for the state's 5th Congressional seat. Bob Fletcher, Republican turned Democrat, is attempting to unseat **GOP Rep. Bill McCollum**, a five-term incumbent from *Altamonte Springs*. Fletcher, a former manufacturer of hand puppets that resemble real-life animals, first made news on the pages of *In These Times* in February 1988. In early 1985 Fletcher's company, Animal Factory Inc., was bought by Gary Best, an arms dealer and an associate of Iran-contra figure Gen. John Singlaub. In May 1987, the FBI prepared a report, subsequently obtained by Fletcher through a Freedom of Information Act request, that had this to say on the subject: "The office of independent counsel has developed information that Gary L. Best, owner of Vista Distribution U.S.A. Inc. ... has the modus operandi of purchasing small-business operations and using the small businesses as a front to hide his real operation of purchase, sale and distribution of weapons, possibly to Central America, other foreign nations, and/or unknown groups." Having been ill-used by the North network, Fletcher began to closely follow the Iran-contra scandal. He was consequently radicalized. Earlier this year he decided to run for the congressional seat held by McCollum.

Joel Bluford

atism, Gantt is not obliged to views; the ideological chasm at there's little room in the

old Gantt's major themes are lly liberal: reducing the deficit ry cuts and reallocating public ward education, the environ- are, etc. He is pro-choice and nishment. His urbane manner tional speaking style create a resence that belies the drama- ecedented nature of Gantt's

eking to become the country's nocratic senator is no stranger was the first black student to uate from Clemson University g South Carolina; his wife was woman to attend Clemson. He n a B.A. in architecture. In 1983 l Charlotte's first black mayor ected in 1985—in a city that white. Between those firsts he

ly around the country and revealed the dan- gers ahead.

These forces charge that the kind of "de- generate so-called art" to which Helms ob- jected is part of an intentional cultural con- spiracy to weaken the spirit of the West. He believes that "the radical homosexual lobby" and its allies, like the "arts community" or agents of the American Civil Liberties Union" are enemies in the culture war cur- rently underway.

War support: This is not a new belief. But in recent decades the longstanding problems provoked by this country's cultural con- tradictions were muted by a national preoc- cupation with external threats. Now that those political threats have ebbed, the focus has turned inward, revealing the scope of the struggle.

This war, which pits neotraditionalist values against the countercultural trends set in motion during the experimental '60s, is being intensified by the growing cultural clout of politically empowered conserva-

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What did he know? Throughout his uphill campaign, Fletcher has raised questions about McCollum's contra connections. He sent a letter to Independent Counsel Lawrence E. Walsh asking him to "open a full criminal investigation into Congressman Irving William McCollum and members of his staff." McCollum, who served on the House and Senate's Iran-contra committee, was one of the eight Republican committee members who signed a minority report saying that Lt. Col. Oliver North did not violate the law. (Last year a jury convicted North of lying to Congress and destroying government documents.) In light of the North diaries made public this summer, it is understandable why McCollum would not think North was guilty, for, if North was guilty, McCollum was apparently guilty as well. According to the diaries, on March 4, 1985, North and National Security Adviser Robert McFarlane met with McCollum and three other Republican members of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence and briefed them about the administration's contra-aid efforts. North wrote that McFarlane told the congressmen: "Plan includes: \$25-50 M. 3rd country support. CIA Intel. Center the activity in W.H. [White House]."

Was McCollum breaking the law? Malcolm Byrne of the National Security Archive in Washington says, "There are two interpretations for the meeting. One, which the four representatives assert is the case, is that they were simply discussing the marking-up [drafting] of the proposed intelligence authorization bill to include certain types of aid that were currently not authorized. The other interpretation is much less kind and implies that they were discussing the White House secret-aid program to the contras that included a number of illegal activities."

La Pencia bombing: Fletcher is also charging that McCollum's top aide, Vaughn Forrest, was neck-deep in North's contra-support network. In 1990 McCollum will pay Forrest \$132,000, an astonishingly high salary for a congressional aide. Forrest is mentioned several times in North's diaries.

The first reference to Forrest in the North diaries is on May 25, 1984. His name came up during a meeting with North courier Robert Owen. Five days later, on March 30, Owen and Forrest showed up in San Jose, Costa Rica, at rancher John Hull's city apartment, where they met with Hull and spent the night. Perhaps coincidentally, that evening a bomb exploded during a press conference called by contra leader Eden Pastora. Eight people were killed and 26 others were seriously injured, including CBS cameraman Tony Avirgan. Avirgan, in conjunction with the Christic Institute, has since charged that the assassination attempt was the work of the CIA and that one of the men who coordinated the bombing was John Hull. Costa Rica has since charged Hull with murder. So far Hull, down home on his Indiana farm, has successfully avoided extradition.

According to the diaries in 1985 and 1986, Forrest met with North at least three times. The two discussed Gen. Richard Secord's secret arms deals to Iran, Gen. Manuel Noriega's support to the contras and other projects. "There is an amazing series of references to one individual [Forrest] in these notebooks," Larry Birns, director of the Council on Hemispheric Affairs, told Larry Locker of the *Tampa Tribune-Times*. "Vaughn Forrest seems to be more of a generalissimo in Oliver North's cause than a senior staffer in a congressional office."

Wrecking RICO: Fletcher has also raised troubling questions about McCollum's co-sponsorship of legislation that in its original form would have amended the RICO [Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act]. (The current amendment, which is better than the original, is awaiting action in the House.) McCollum wanted to restrict who could be charged under RICO and to limit damages awarded defendants to actual damages rather than triple damages as provided for in current law. Further, the amendment McCollum co-sponsored would have applied retroactively to those civil RICO suits that are still pending, such as the *Avirgan vs. Hull* suit that is currently winding its way through the court system.

McCollum's version of the RICO amendment, with its proposal to do away with triple damages, would have been a boon to those implicated in the S&L scandal, for example, Lincoln Savings and Loan's Charles Keating, who is being sued under RICO. As Rep. John Conyers (D-MI) wrote in a *New York Times* op-ed piece, "If the American people don't holler fast, the crooks who looted the nation's savings and loans are going to get off very cheaply."

McCollum, who sits on the bank oversight committee, has this year taken in \$32,000 from S&L PACs. This puts him in the top four percent of congressmen who have benefited from S&L PAC largess. In fact, McCollum, like other S&L PAC recipients, has written federal regulators on behalf of troubled S&Ls asking the feds to slack off. One of the S&Ls McCollum intervened on behalf of is CenTrust Savings Bank of Miami, the bailout of which will cost taxpayers an estimated \$2 billion.

Gone catfishin'

Workers at Delta Pride Catfish Inc., the world's largest catfish processing plant, are entering the second month of a strike that pits 1,200 employees—most of them black women—against the 180 white farmers who cooperatively own the Indianola, Mississippi-based company. Veteran union organizers from all over the country have come to Indianola to support the strike, the largest by blacks in the state's history, and the sometimes-violent struggle has come to resemble a '60s civil rights battle, reports the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. Low pay, unhealthy conditions and constant affronts to workers' dignity have brought a "plantation mentality" into the plant, says one worker. So far, three major St. Louis supermarket chains have agreed to boycott Delta Pride.

Halfway out of El Salvador

With a solid 74 to 25 majority, the Senate passed a bill Oct. 19 slashing El Salvador's 1991 military aid package by 50 percent. The bill, reports Micah Fink, includes language allowing for a total cut-off of U.S. aid if the Salvadoran government does not vigorously prosecute the case of the six Jesuit priests murdered almost one year ago by members of the Salvadoran military. But the bill also includes provisions that would release the full amount of aid if the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front refuses to continue negotiations with the military or launches a major offensive that threatens the survival of the Alfredo Cristiani government.

Lessons in democracy

The firebombing of a Sandinista radio station in Managua early last month failed to raise the hackles of U.S. government officials, cultural leaders and the chorus of erstwhile upholders of human rights, writes Carl Shames. The 1986 Sandinista shutdown of the CIA-funded *La Prensa* newspaper, however, made front page news or days as even progressives joined in condemning the "free speech" violation. Allowing *La Prensa* to reopen was an early step in the Sandinista decision to seek international support by playing by the rules of democracy. While Americans lose liberties every day, while the U.S. government increasingly operates outside the bounds of the constitution, it is unseemly for U.S. citizens to be pointing fingers elsewhere with lessons in democracy, Shames concludes. Let's be wiser next time.

Bring the troops home

Lead by a group of U.S. military reservists who say they refuse to be sent to the Persian Gulf, more than 20,000 demonstrators marched through midtown Manhattan Oct. 20 chanting "Money for jobs, not for war—bring the troops home." While the New York rally was the largest in the U.S., the "nationally coordinated day of local protests," called for by the Coalition to Stop U.S. Intervention in the Middle East, drew international response as well. More than 15,000 marched in Paris, 23,000 in Tokyo and 1,000 in Sydney, Australia.

Tuning in to corporate responsibility

Angered by corporations that run for the border—away from U.S. labor and environmental protection laws—Teamsters Local 912 of Watsonville, Calif., has gone video. A 15-minute documentary, *Dirty Business: Food Exports to the United States*, is part of the union's national Coalition Campaign for Corporate Responsibility—a battle cry to nationwide environmental, labor, hunger, church, child welfare and human rights organizations. The video contrasts the recent loss of jobs in Watsonville (see ETC, Oct. 24) with footage of exploited workers, child labor abuses and gross environmental degradation in Irapuato, Mexico, where Watsonville's Pillsbury/Green Giant plant has relocated. To obtain a copy of the video, contact Migrant Media Productions at (408) 728-8949.

Under God, with irradiation for all

A little divine inspiration prompted the swing vote needed to approve construction of the nation's first food-irradiation plant in Mulberry, Fla., last month. City Commissioner Johnnie B. Smith had long opposed a local company's plans to build the plant that will produce low levels of radiation used to kill micro-organisms on citrus and strawberries. But after seeking "direction through prayer" before a vote on Vindicator of Florida's request for a building permit, Smith changed his mind, and the measure passed 3-to-2. The sale of irradiated produce has been banned by Japan, several European nations and some Northeastern states. In addition, if one of Florida's notorious sinkholes "ate" the plant, which is scheduled to break ground in the next month, its radiation would pollute one-third of the state's drinking water for 700 years.