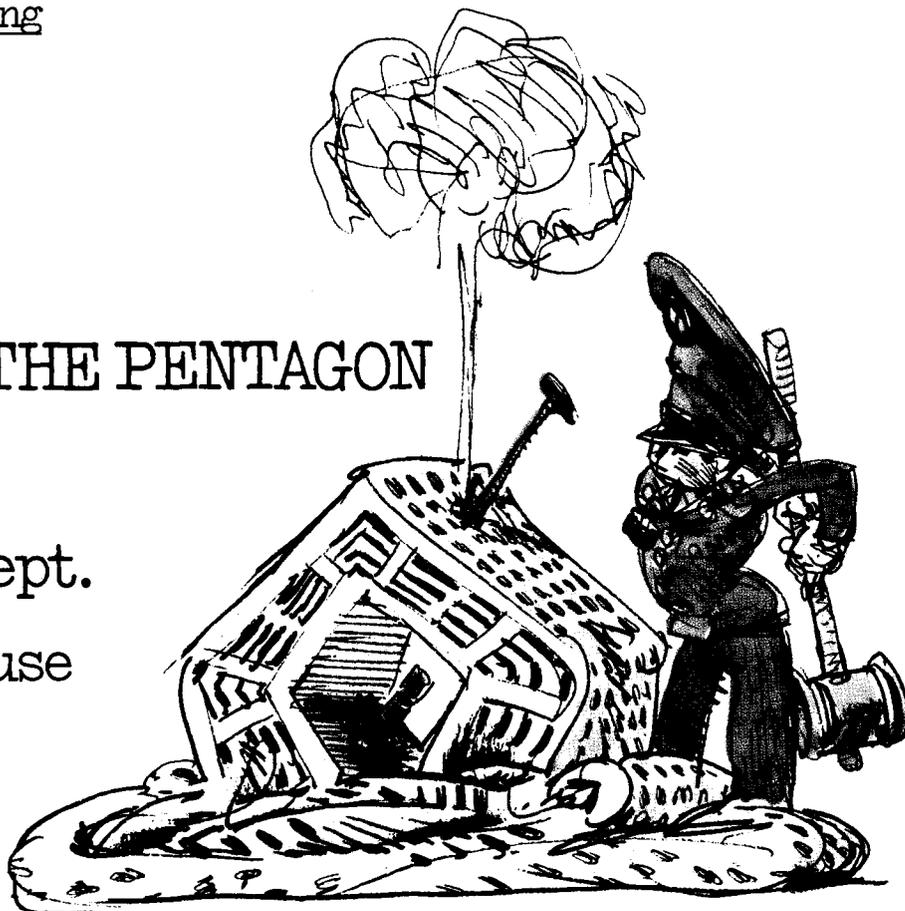


the informal art of leaking

SLOW LEAK IN THE PENTAGON  
(and the CIA  
and the State Dept.  
and the White House  
and...)



CALL HIM KENDALL. HE IS A U.S. Government employee with access to top-secret Pentagon documents. Early in October, 1971, a highly sensitive Joint Chiefs of Staff paper came across his desk. It outlined a proposed five-year plan for American programs in Cambodia.

Kendall is a public servant, a civil service employee, an organization man. Still, he was appalled by what he read. The Joint Chiefs were recommending that American involvement in Cambodia be greatly increased, that annual military aid be more than doubled over the next five years, and that Cambodian military and paramilitary forces be increased five-fold, to over 800,000 by 1977. The object was to "win" the war in Cambodia by driving the North Vietnamese out of the country and crushing the native Khmer Rouge guerrilla forces.

That night Kendall got into a conversation with a congressional aide at a Washington cocktail party. He talked freely about the plan and promised to

provide the aide with detailed notes on it. Within a week, Max Frankel used these notes to break the story on the front page of the *New York Times*. The same day Frankel's article appeared, Secretary of Defense Laird publicly refused either to confirm or deny the existence of the plan, and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee approved a spending and personnel ceiling on American involvement in Cambodia.

The whole Cambodian question received widespread media coverage that week, and the Pentagon eventually shelved its five year plan for Cambodia. A State Department official who worked on Cambodian affairs confirmed nearly a year later that, more than any other factor, it was the publicity resulting from Kendall's leak which stopped the Joint Chiefs' plan from being put into effect.

In a recent interview, Kendall talked about this whole affair: "What got to me was the colossal stupidity of the plan. There were lots of people

within the government who felt the same way. But it wasn't in anyone's interest to put himself in front of the plan's increasing momentum. The White House was behind it, and no one wanted to throw himself on his own bureaucratic sword. . . .

"Sure, I was frightened when the story appeared in the paper. A major investigation was started, and I regretted having done it for the next few days. But I soon got over that. I felt strongly that the plan had to be stopped. It was the kind of thing that was so stupid that, once it saw the light of day, even its own authors wouldn't claim it. I had been looking for a way to effectively stop it, and the leak seemed to accomplish just that."

Leaking has become effective as ordinary, loyal, hard-working bureaucrats like Kendall increasingly take it on themselves to blow the whistle on official plans and actions which offend their sense of decency. The leakers have appeared throughout the execu-



tive branch and the armed forces. A disparate group, they share a notion that "higher loyalty" compels them to expose activities they consider to be wrong. Some of them have become famous (the "cosmic leaks," in the words of one reporter): people like Daniel Ellsberg and Anthony Russo (who leaked the Pentagon Papers); Ron Ridenhour (My Lai); Sgt. Lonnie Franks (the Lavelle affair); Christopher Pyle (who told about military spying on civilians). These, however, represent only a tiny percentage of the total number of whistle-blowers who in recent years have worked on the fabric of governmental secrecy like a hoard of hungry moths. Most retain their anonymity—and their jobs. They are the nameless sources who turn up leads for investigative journalists like Seymour Hersh, to name one.

Hersh, the man who uncovered the My Lai massacre, works for the *New York Times*. Not long ago, he returned from a week in Stockholm and Copenhagen where he had interviewed the recently released American POWs, and, sitting at his Washington desk, he

slowly opened the accumulated mail. Among other things, he found:

- \* a xerox copy of a letter from the CIA's general counsel, to a New York publisher, in which the Agency asserted the right to prior censorship of a new book on the CIA by a former agent

- \* an anonymous letter telling where to look for information about illegal campaign funds contributed to an Ohio congressman

- \* a letter from military intelligence personnel in Thailand describing the alleged cover-up of the American bombing of a Cambodian city

- \* a letter about the possible U.S. government purchase of chemicals for weather modification

- \* a letter from an anti-draft organization about the death in Vietnam of an anti-war GI who allegedly was made to "volunteer" for a suicide mission and

- \* a letter from another ex-CIA man giving a detailed account of many of his former employer's activities

Not all of these tips would develop into articles, but it is on the basis of

leads like these that most recent scandals have developed. Brit Hume is one who knows the process. An associate of Jack Anderson, he interviewed lobbyist Dita Beard one day, and shortly thereafter Anderson wrote up the story in his daily column. What followed will be known to history as the ITT affair. In a recent interview, Hume described how the Anderson operation relies on leaks: "There is a huge number of people—hundreds, literally—who are in touch with us. They call us voluntarily to tell us about things that are wrong in their own departments. Some of them are liberals who see undue influence by big business and other forces they consider improper. Others have a much less sophisticated attitude toward things.

"There's a whole network of people inside the government. They don't know each other, but they know us. They're lower echelon people who are fed up with the way the government is doing certain things. Sometimes they come up with something really good.

"For example, I've gotten a steady flow of stories from one part of the Interior Department. They come from a source who sincerely believes in the Interior Department and the possible good it could do. He is constantly being distressed by the way political operators are stuck over there, by the way all types of cheap media techniques are being used to promote a false image of concern for the environment.

"The Government tends to attract people who are interested in causes. After all, if you're interested in the environment, the Interior Department has at least the theoretical power to do something about it. If you work there and find nothing is happening because of the failure of people in key positions to take the right approach, it's not very far from that step to a position where you start passing the word out to the newspapers, which can at least apply some counter-pressure. This is an increasingly familiar thing."

Anderson's reliance on the "little people" in government follows the practice of his predecessor, Drew Pearson. While this has enabled him to bring out exposés of such skulduggery as abuses in the Pentagon motor pool and the alleged drunken

conduct of the U.S. ambassador to France, it has—until recently—kept him out of the area of national security policy. In fact, the foreign policy scandals of recent years represent a departure from the historic pattern insofar as they surface through *unauthorized* leaks. To be sure, the *Chicago Tribune* published America's secret war plans on the eve of Pearl Harbor, but as a rule, the media and Congress have received their tidbits of top-secret information through authorized leaks. Generally, they come in the spring (Sen. Stuart Symington calls the process as inevitable as the blooming of cherry blossoms) and usually they take the form of highly classified intelligence on new Soviet threats. The source is invariably in the Pentagon, and the data reflects the particular interests of the service which applies it: if the threat is a Soviet aircraft carrier or submarine, the U.S. Navy has done the leaking; if it concerns a new Soviet bomber, the Air Force is usually responsible; if the information is about a Soviet tank. . . . In the words of syndicated columnist Joseph Kraft, ". . . far, far more than civilians in the government, the uniformed military are in the habit of leaking information to serve their own interests."

Not that civilians have shunned the authorized leak formula. In July 1972, for instance, the White House tried to justify the President's Middle East policy (and win Jewish votes in the process) by giving columnist Stewart Alsop secret information on how Nixon's tough stand in the 1970 Jordanian crisis had caused the Soviets to back down—thus winning the gratitude of the Israelis. And, in the aftermath of Jack Anderson's publication of secret White House documents on the India-Pakistan war, Administration officials permitted a few carefully selected newsmen to read sensitive CIA agent reports which quoted top Indian officials to the effect that India intended to destroy Pakistan.\*

\* These reports were made available to the newsmen for background with the understanding they could not be printed. The possible compromise of CIA's clandestine agents was evidently thought to be less important than correcting the unfavorable press treatment the Administration was receiving on the American "tilt" toward Pakistan.



These leaks do not come from morally outraged bureaucrats. Rather, they emanate from high officials who pass out secret information as a weapon of policy, in accordance with the popular adage that "the ship of state leaks at the top."

In recent years, however, the ship has begun to leak at all levels, as junior officers, secretaries, messengers, and xerox machine operators have joined the action. This is a new development, and it has taken the upper echelon by surprise. As recently as 1970, a State Department official discounted the danger of leaks from younger bureaucrats by saying, "I doubt if one of the kids would even know the *New York Times*' phone number." He would not repeat the words so confidently today.

#### [THE ROUND-EYED LEAK]

*So far in the Vietnam War there has always seemed to be some Sergeant Franks, at My Lai and elsewhere. Always there seems to be some round-eyed, unsophisticated boy, aghast at*

*what he sees or is ordered to do, who waits expectantly for someone in higher command to put a stop to it and who ultimately—pricked perhaps by his conception of right and wrong—appeals to outside authority."*

(Richard L. Strout in the *Christian Science Monitor*, Sept. 15, 1972.)

A 23-year-old Air Force sergeant, Lonnie Franks was stationed at U Dorn Air Base during the winter of 1971-1972. Through his work in intelligence, he learned that U.S. planes had carried out scores of bombing missions over North Vietnam in direct violation of the rules of engagement—such as they were at the time—and that Air Force personnel were routinely submitting false reports of these raids.

Franks had read extensively about the My Lai massacre and the Pentagon Papers. He believed that, as an individual, he had a responsibility to expose what was wrong. So, in March 1972, he wrote a letter to his senator, Harold



Hughes of Iowa, describing the illegal bombing. In an interview six months later, Franks said, "I could have waited, but the material was still fresh. There's no way the military could have covered its trail."

Franks' letter to Hughes proved to be the opening salvo in the Lavelle affair and it ultimately brought about the removal of General Lavelle as the Air Force chief in Southeast Asia. Both houses of Congress held hearings, which for the first time opened up to public discussion the question of command and control of the air war.

Yet, when it was all over, Lavelle had escaped into retirement with a virtually tax-free \$27,000 annual pension and a meaningless demotion in rank. General Creighton Abrams, U.S. Commander in Vietnam, was confirmed as the new Army Chief of Staff with only two dissenting votes, and Admiral Thomas Moorer, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, survived with his career intact, despite indications that both he and Abrams knew of the bombing raids.

Franks believes that Abrams and

#### CONFESSIONS OF A LEAKER

I WAITED IN THE PHONE BOOTH AND GAZED OUT THE door. Jack Anderson's secretary was going to get a certain "Mr. Spear" whom she described as one of Mr. Anderson's associates. As I waited, people were busily zipping in and out of the cafeteria right outside the door, including, no doubt, some people from the office. Everyone in the office ate there. Just then I spotted one of our clerks trotting by. She glanced my way, waved when she saw me looking at her, then went in to eat. I wondered in panic if she thought it unusual that I would be making a call from a booth instead of from my office. I mentally kicked myself in the ass and hunkered down in the booth, turning my face from the corridor.

"This is Joe Spear."

"Hi, uh, Joe. As I told your secretary, I have some information that I think Mr. Anderson would be interested in."

"What kind of information?"

"Well, it has to do with secret government files."

"What kind of secret files?"

I took a deep breath and plunged in.

"Well, you see, I work for the government. And just recently, I became aware that the Secret Service keeps track of potential assassins and they have this big computer list of all these people. Lots of people."

"Just how many people are on this list?"

"Well, maybe a hundred thousand or so. I don't have an exact count."

"Let me get this straight. The United States Secret Ser-

vice has a computer data bank of potential assassins with a hundred thousand names on file, right? I didn't think there were so many people bent on knocking off old Tricky Dick."

"Well, that's not why I called. You see, a lot of these people are pretty well-known. You know, movie stars, and athletes, and politicians, and radicals. Black radicals, lots of blacks."

"Who are some of these people?"

"Well, like Tony Randall and Marlon Brando and Carl Reiner and Groucho Marx and Joe Louis. Oh yeah. Coretta King and Ralph Abernathy, too."

"Jesus Christ! What in the goddamn hell is the matter with those people? Do they really believe Mrs. Martin Luther King wants to kill the President? That's the most fantastic thing I've ever heard. Well, come to think of it, maybe it isn't so fantastic."

"Joe Namath, too."

"Yeah? Incredible."

"Cassius Clay, too. I mean Muhammad Ali."

"Unreal."

"Oh, yeah, man. They've got more people in there than Carter has little liver pills."

I started to get excited myself. "Jane Fonda's in there, and her anti-war sidekick Donald Sutherland. And there's quite a few local political figures like Marion Barry and Walter Fauntroy and Julius Hobson. All the black leaders are there, like Jesse Jackson and Floyd McKissick and Roy Innis and James Farmer and Stokely Carmichael and Huey Newton and Eldridge Cleaver and Angela Davis and Adam

Moorer both lied to protect their careers, but, then, he says, "the military was lying up one side and down the other."

When asked why he originally wrote to Senator Hughes, Franks replied, "The whole thing was very, very wrong. I couldn't think of any reason for not doing it, except that it might hurt my career. That seemed extremely petty."

Franks was no radical anti-war activist. Despite his now strong opposition to the war, five weeks before the recent election he was still undecided on his choice for the presidency. He affirms a strong belief in the American system, but he admits he has less faith in it now than before.

Ron Ridenhour, the young veteran who started the My Lai investigation, speaks in similar terms: "I was a firm believer in the principles this country was founded on—and still am in the Jeffersonian sense. I believed those things I learned in school about American ideals, and what happened at My Lai was a betrayal of those ideals." Still, he had qualms about blowing the



Clayton Powell."

"My God! They've actually got a United States congressman listed as a potential assassin. That is absolutely incredible."

"Yeah. It's Powell all right. I checked on the birthday."

"My God."

At least he sounded interested. In fact, by this time I was breathing hard myself. I was so worked up I was trying to stand up in the phone booth. I nervously hunkered down again.

"Listen. Can you get any of those papers and bring them down to my office right away. I mean just as soon as possible?"

I noticed I was sweating again.

"Well, jeez. Man, I'll try, but it isn't going to be really easy. You know, you just don't waltz in and casually scoop up an armful of dossiers and waltz out again. It might take me awhile."

"Well, see what you can do, and come by the office here this afternoon, whether you're able to grab anything or not. We'll talk more about it then.

I met Spear that same afternoon. He greeted me with "Hey, man! How ya doin'?" Come on in." Meanwhile, he was vigorously pumping my arm and pounding my back.

Spear is an enthusiastic man in his early thirties, with blondish hair and a short blonde brush moustache. Kind of like Walter Cronkite's. His face was lit up with a positively gleeful leer. More of a smirk, really. The expression that Bill Cosby uses so frequently during his routines. I began to grin myself. I guess being a spy has certain rewards.

"Let's see what you've got."

"OK. Let's see here." I began pulling out thick dossiers and flipping them on his desk. "There's Joe Namath, and Marlon Brando, and Carl Reiner and Floyd McKissick, for starters.

Spear was cackling fiendishly with delight. Within seconds my armful of dossiers was spread over every desk in the office, while we poured through them. I hadn't had the time to read them previously, so it was just as new to me as to him. When either of us would come across something particularly outrageous, we'd read it out loud. It wasn't long before the secretary was happily copying documents as fast as she could shove them into the copying machine. We just decided to copy everything in the files so that I could return them as soon as possible.

Spear and I made arrangements for future meetings. Since I could not remove the dossiers from the files for any great length of time, I would have to bring them to Anderson's office to be copied, then return them later. We also discussed various techniques for avoiding suspicion and diverting attention. Finger prints were a point of concern with me, and Spear suggested a liberal application of fingernail polish. I began to think he was a reformed safecracker or something. Maybe not even so reformed.

Shaking hands, he walked me to the door. As I started out, I turned and said with an idiot grin, "You know, yesterday I couldn't even spell sleuth, and today I is one."

He grinned back and said, "OK, sleuth. Just don't get your ass caught."

He really didn't have to say it again.

## HOW TO LEAK

IF YOU HAPPEN TO WORK IN THE government (or anywhere else for that matter) and you know about something secret which you believe to be wrong, you are a potential leaker.

Once you have made the decision that you no longer can remain silent, you ought to use your information in a way to maximize the impact. A well placed leak has been known to halt a particularly objectionable government program, and, failing that, the revelation itself can go far in cracking excessive government secrecy and changing popular beliefs.

There is no reason for you to identify yourself to anyone other than the reporter you are dealing with, and—if you go so far as to mail documents in a plain envelope—you can even remain anonymous to the reporter.

You should look for a journalist who is sympathetic to your cause. Avoid with a passion those reporters who are dependent on government handouts for their success. They will not risk the loss of their *entrée* into the Washington establishment by offending their high-placed sources. In this category are both Alsops, Evans and Novak, Joseph Kraft, and most of the gray-beard commentators.

Try to choose a reporter who has written about similar matters and who has shown muckraking skills in the past. A partial list of trustworthy and skilled people is given below:

### *For leaks of all kinds:*

Brit Hume  
Ramparts Magazine  
2054 University Ave.  
Berkeley, Ca. 94704  
(415) 845-8871

Jack Anderson  
1612 K St. N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20006  
(202) 347-4325

### *For military intelligence, or Vietnam:*

Seymour Hersh  
New York Times  
1920 L St. N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20036  
(202) 293-3100

George Wilson  
Washington Post  
1150 15th St. N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20005  
(202) 223-6000

### *For consumer rip-offs:*

Morton Mintz or  
Nick Kotz  
Washington Post

### *For political finance scandals:*

Jerry Landauer  
Wall St. Journal  
245 National Press Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20004  
(202) 783-0164

Robert Walters  
Washington Star News  
225 Virginia S.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20003  
(202) 484-5000

Carl Bernstein or  
Bob Woodward  
Washington Post

### *And keep in mind:*

Thomas Oliphant  
Boston Globe  
Room 310  
1750 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20006  
(202) 298-9169

Richard Dudman  
St. Louis Post-Dispatch  
Room 550  
1701 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20006  
(202) 298-6880

Morton Kondracke  
Chicago Sun-Times  
1366 National Press Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20004  
(202) EX 3-0151

Clark Mollenhoff  
Des Moines Register  
952 National Press Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20004  
(202) DI 7-9111

Saul Friedman  
Knight Newspapers  
1195 National Press Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20004  
(202) ME 8-2844

Rather than leaking directly to the media, another possible recipient might be a public-interest organization which is on the right side of the issue that concerns you. You can take advantage of the experience that has been built up by a Nader-type group, and often your information can be coordinated with an ongoing campaign. In this way there is a better chance that the leak will come out in a way and at a time to have maximum impact. Some possible organizations are:

### *For domestic issues:*

Ralph Nader  
Center for Study  
of Responsive Law  
P.O. Box 19367  
Washington, D.C. 20036  
(202) 833-3400

### *On Indochina:*

Indochina Resources  
Center/Project Air War  
1322 18th St. N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20036  
(202) 785-3114

### *For environment issues:*

Environmental Policy Center  
324 C St. S.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20003  
(202) 547-6500

whistle: "I either had to betray my friends who were part of the unit—although they were obviously betrayed themselves by the military system—or betray myself. I knew in my guts what I had to do. I just felt I had to bring the whole thing out into the open.

Franks and Ridenhour were both in their early 20's when they made their revelations. Franks believed he would find justice by informing his senator of

the illegal bombing. Ridenhour chose to write to 30 political figures, including the President, Cabinet members, senators, and congressmen. His aim, as he put it, was "to see if I could find one honest man." Ridenhour believes he found his man in Congressman Morris Udall of Arizona, and Franks expresses strong support for the way Senator Hughes handled his information.

Less confident about the ability of any one person to be his champion was Christopher Pyle, who first exposed military surveillance of civilians in January 1970. A student of political science, and a lawyer, Pyle was convinced that he could not have any effect on the Pentagon's domestic spying if he did not mount what he calls "a three-pronged attack." His strategy  
*(Continued on Page 49)*

First, there was Sergeant York, the calm doughboy sharp-shooter, the epitome of the American fighting man in World War I. Then there was Audie Murphy, his machine guns blazing, grenades popping, capturing companies (or was it battalions?) of Huns in World War II. And in the Korean War it was Tony Herbert who received the most decorations and whose pictures adorned Army recruiting posters. Come 1969, the U.S. high command had high hopes that Lieutenant Colonel Anthony B. Herbert would go on to greater glory in bloody Vietnam.

Winner of a battlefield commission, Lt. Col. Herbert was considered one of the very best combat infantrymen and commanders the American army has ever produced. He had been trained in every military skill. He had engaged in clandestine, overt, and paramilitary operations and he seemed destined for a career which would lead him to the highest levels of the Pentagon. But somehow, somewhere in Vietnam, Lt. Col. Herbert's career took a dramatically different course. He thought he had been sent there to serve as a soldier. But in fact the situation demanded that he become something else—a murderer. Faced with the contradictions of his own idealism and the grotesque actualities of the war in Indochina, Tony Herbert discovered that truth was more important to him than obedience and that he was more human than

# SOLDIER



*Lt. Col. Anthony Herbert  
as he appeared on  
a recruitment poster.*

**by anthony b. herbert with james t. wooten**

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