

12 September 1973

Senator Herman Talmadge
U. S. Senate
Washington, D.C.

Dear Senator Talmadge,

During your interrogation of L. Patrick Gray on the 6th of August 1973 you asked a question which aroused my intense interest. You asked Mr. Gray if, when he was about to destroy the two files which included forged cablegrams designed to implicate President John F. Kennedy in the assassination of Diem, it had not occurred to him to keep these documents for the light they might throw on the assassination of President Kennedy as a retaliatory action.

For the last ten years I have been a student of the Dallas assassination and the Warren Report. My work in that field of inquiry is mentioned in the enclosed annotated bibliography by David R. Wrone which appeared in the Wisconsin Magazine of History for Autumn 1972. Please note highlighted passages on pages 26, 27, 30, and 34. In particular, please see reference on page 27 to my Subject Index to the Warren Report and Hearings & Exhibits.

It has occurred to me that I might usefully undertake the preparation of a Subject Index to the published proceedings of the Ervin Committee and related proceedings of other Congressional bodies as well as relevant exhibits such as the statements issued by President Nixon on the subject of Watergate. I know from my correspondence that my Subject Index to the Warren Report has been widely used as a research tool by historians and scholars.

I believe that a Watergate Subject Index would be of incalculable value to scholars and researchers and to universities and other seats of learning, and serve as a tool for identifying, illuminating and assessing the major events of our time.

Before I explore seriously the project of preparing a Watergate Subject Index, I should like to know whether the staff of the Ervin Select Committee itself will index the volumes of testimony and exhibits which I assume will be published by the Government Printing Office. If not, and if you and your colleagues believe that a Subject Index can usefully be compiled, I would plan to go ahead with that endeavor.

I enclose a list of questions related to such a project in the hope that you or your colleagues can provide me with guidance. I would feel it a privilege to have some small part in the service of truth and justice which the Select Committee is pursuing.

Yours sincerely,



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Enclosures

A Watergate Subject Index

Sylvia Meagher

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(1) I am contemplating the task of preparing for the transcripts of the Ervin Committee hearings and exhibits and for related publications issued or to be issued by the Government Printing Office a Subject Index similar in methodology and format to my Subject Index to the Warren Report and the Hearings and Exhibits.

(2) A number of questions would have to be clarified before I reach any decision to start work on such a Subject Index --first and foremost, what arrangements are being made by the Ervin Committee or the Government Printing Office for indexing the testimony and exhibits? If adequate indexing is to be prepared by those government sources, there would be no need for a Subject Index from a private indexer.

(3) A further question to be clarified is the number of volumes to be published, and the timetable for release as well as a rough estimate at least of a cut-off date.

(4) The number of volumes to be issued and made available for purchase by members of the public, and the price for the set of volumes or individual editions, are also vital considerations. A Subject Index would be useful only to persons who acquire the set of transcripts and exhibits; the number of purchasers (especially libraries, universities, and similar institutions) would be a central consideration in seeking commercial publication of such an Index.

(5) Finally, the phased preparation of a Subject Index in a series of up-dated versions corresponding roughly with the phased release of the hearings must be studied in terms of utility to users, on one hand, and as a serious obstacle to commercial publication, on the other.