

2 October 1971

Dear Howard,

Yesterday morning I mailed to you copies of a letter from Belin of 9/23/71 and my reply of 10/1/71, and when I got home from the office I found your letter of 9/29/71 to Harold and me. I can fully sympathize with your dilemma, since I had to draft and redraft each of my three letters to Belin before I had a version that satisfied me. Like you, I did not want Belin to have the last word, but neither do I want to waste any further time on letters to a man who is, or is pretending to be, deaf dumb blind and mentally defective. That is why I tried to anticipate an attempt by Belin to have the "last word" in the last paragraph of my 10/1/71 letter, which I ended with one of those pretentious Latin dicta of which he is so fond and which I hope he realizes is my way of mocking him.

I certainly do not find your own draft ending too strong. If anything, it is not insulting enough, since you are generous enough to leave him the possible alibi of not being a well man. I feel certain that he is an unmitigated liar, who lies to himself as well as to others, and a man who is less than mediocre intellectually and professionally.

I would not start, if I were you, with the phrase "There is no response I can make..." but, rather, I would say that his assurances deserve no reply since they are completely destroyed by ample evidence of his chicanery, untruthfulness, and malfeasance. I would also omit the reference to his not being a well man, since clearly he is not mentally disturbed but only morally diseased.

The second paragraph is fine. The last paragraph, too, except for the final sentence, which is perhaps too terse. I would be inclined to say something like the following:

"I ask myself—apparently men like Belin can live with the disgusting actions they have performed, but can the country endure when the very same men who are supposed to represent law and justice are the foremost lawbreakers and merchants of official deception? "

or

"Apparently you can live with the knowledge of your disgusting actions but I ask myself if this country can survive when men like you, who are supposed to represent law and justice, are the foremost merchants of official falsification and deceit."

I hope these suggestions are helpful, but please feel free to disregard them entirely.

Hastily, with best regards,