

2/18/68

Dr. Cyril H. Wecht
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Dear Cyril.

You ask if I think our "courtroom victory" will "have any significant favorable impact...or will it die away in a few days?"

I think it is one of the major developments of this long fight that may yet be long. If it does not get a big press, do not take this to mean it will not have a deep effect, immediately and in the future. It was no problem for me to choose between this and being in New Orleans. I returned for this and to write the book of which I told you but part, a book that analyzes it. It is my opinion that in several ways this moves the matter into a different area.

Politically, for the near future, the new administration, if it can but learn it, does not suffer the liability of having five of the seven members of the Commission from its ranks. The manner in which Clark handled this makes him the immediate focus. This matter has become one of his integrity, his integrity of intent and of performance. He has delivered himself as a party, if the Nixon administration chooses to accept him. If they do, they can avoid the liabilities this issue brought to the Johnson administration.

Also politically, there has been more than enough local attention to have a pronounced impact on the Congress, though the members may remain silent.

Most of all, there now can be no Kennedy innocence. There now can be no question, as there was with Bobby, "What does he know? What does he believe?" If he now does not know, it can be only because he does not want to. It may take some time for him to choose a course of action, or to remain on that of inaction, but he will have made a conscious decision from which he cannot escape. I would like to hope he will elect ashhood. I have written him, sending the letter to reach him before any court action, so he would be alert to it. The letter may not have reached him; but it was not returned to me, so it reached his office. The real problem here is who he will speak to. Should he speak to an Epstein, this will have little influence on him, for he will not believe. Regardless, there is now in his political path the problem that he must know his brother's murder is unsolved. This will not be easy to live with, not to ~~start~~ start in three or four years.

Those many guilty in the executive branch and on the Commission now also are asked. They may continue ostrich-living, but it provides no defense against conscience or adversaries. Is it assuming too much to assume they have consciences? I think, for some, it is not. These will now have real troubles with themselves. These who were part of this, and they are so many in the government, now must know what they were part of. They cannot be proud. Time will not ease the hurt decent ones must feel.

The autopsy is not established as the fruit of perjury. In the book I have written on this aspect, I call the autopsy doctors perjurers, dare them to sue me, and repeat, with embellishments, the earlier and ignored charges I made against Spector, that he was a deliberate, repetitive liar, and I now ask did he suborn perjury. I am satisfied he did. I dare him to sue. I think there is no chance any will, for none dare risk a judicial determination of fact. ~~When~~ I asked you a year ago to represent me in a suit, what we went into is but part of what I had in mind. If we have not gotten what we might have obtained with a couple of civil suits we also have gotten what we might not have, with a real success. So, we will have to see how these seven doctors live with their morning shaves and daily lives. What I then sought by suits is yet to be achieved. Perhaps we can follow with this, when the immediate action has run its course. Bud has felt both ways about it.

But to a large number of Americans, we have established in a court of law, under a cross-examination, that they were lied to by the government that told them how it came into power when their President was murdered. This is a little different than a book by Sylvia Meagher or Harold Feisberg, cannot be dismissed by the prostitute press. In fact, I have seen no single effort to dismiss it. Rather, they have sought to play it down.

In the long run, I think this is more significant than what is happening in New Orleans. A victory there will be a major step to getting a re-opened and public investigation. But it may very well be followed by a reversal, and Shaw is not charged with being part of the successful conspiracy. This deals with the essence. It is not that we have never before destroyed everything. Most of the books, separately, did that. This does it in a different way, in one that makes ignoring it hazardous for those in power who do ignore it. More, this makes, in a sense, a success of the New Orleans suit, whether it results in conviction or not.

These things of which I told you are not all I discovered in my analysis of these new documents. They may be the most important, but there is much else of significance. I have had the book written for about two weeks. My wife has finished retyping it. I will make a limited edition of it this week and will, if you'd like, lend you a copy. It is, as so much of my work has been, too hasty. This is one of the consequences of writing and trying to get public attention for books faster than magazines can be published. But it is recorded, and as soon as I clean it up, I can get to other work that must be done. I will not have completed the annotation of the appendix, and I will be adding a postscript covering what began Friday morning, with appropriate additions to the appendix. If possible, I plan to use photocopies of several pages of your testimony and some of the more incredible of the cross-examination, if the lawyer in you does not rebel at this usage. I think I will be able to get this, and soon. This book is really the third part of a very large one of which I gave you the first on Friday. When I have this in hand I shall do the second part, a slight indication of the content of which I gave you verbally. Commercial publication may be distant, but the record is almost made, and that has its own importance, is an essential first step.

When I heard on the radio this morning and then read in the paper that the government announced it would be in the appeals court "first thing" I rushed there. It was and remained dark. Joe Hanson would not tell me their plans. However, he did assure me there would be no court appearances today. Bud had no further knowledge lunch time, and I've not heard from him since. I did learn from the appeals-court clerk that an assistant federal attorney has been hovering around for three weeks alerting them to the imminence of something on this case, so they may have expected to lose and did know they'd appeal.

What I gave you has errors in it. It has not been proofread. Now has what I am now working on, which I xeroxed today. That is not prerequisite to their immediate purposes. So, do not be surprised if you find typographical errors, citations missing, etc. I do have every document I cite, and I do plan to include each, in full, in the appendix. I plan to include every document in the current case, too, for I think we have made a consequential, historical record, and I would like it, in full, to be publicly available.

If we cannot borrow a copy of the transcript, so it can be copied and those of us wanting copies can obtain them, I will see if from the court I can get Xeroxes which can, thereafter, be copied. Garrison has not yet ordered a copy. I believe the price has not been reduced to less than a third of what it was, about \$250.00, an enormous sum to me. If we can borrow a copy and Xerox it, that will pay for copies for quite a few people. Or, it would pay for the inclusion of a quite a few pages in a published book.

I cannot end without expressing my sincere respect for the excellent, effective job you did. If it did not surprise me, it nonetheless was quite gratifying, especially for one whose pearls have so often ended before swine. Yours was a solid, authoritative, through testimony, the final tribute to which was the fear of it by a battery of seven government lawyers. It is not often I have seen something one of us has done, including myself, that I have not also seen possibilities of improving. I think, under the circumstances, your testimony, could not have been better, it was that very good. We are all in your debt. You showed excellent command of the facts and your disciplines, and everything you did was in the perfect key, as, for example, your discourse on science and art, and your expository of Fisher.

If it is unfortunate we could not spend more time together, I am glad we have this brief opportunity. I look forward to a better exchange in the future.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg