

6/3/70

Dear Sylvia,

Thanks for your excellent commentary on those I have come to think of as the whistling shrimps. Even in private correspondence, this is the first sign I've seen that any others really understood the executive sessions. You'd be surprised at the comment of one of the most impressive and perceptive, who saw in this after getting Lifton's book only a bunch of old ladies cackling.

As soon as they were given to Wise I got the complete set and began two things: a fight with the Archives and an exhaustive analysis I had to lay aside for other things. As you may recall, I have woven some of it into other writings published but not printed. Then I thought of a book tentatively titled ~~Excess~~ Exsess and my original writing is more than book length. Then I considered making this part 2 of AGENT OSWALD, for special reasons. I've not completely made up my mind, but I tend to think now, eventually, in terms of a separate book and I've wondered, from time to time, whether I could title it "The Whistling Shrimps".

I've done much on and with this, too much to go into here and now, and I've discovered a fair amount that is still unknown. I've done some tracing and checking and I've had some rather unusual contacts I cannot disclose save to say that where you, in your own writing, not as part of a review, get into this area, you could not be more correct than you are.

Isn't that Katzenbach stuff incredible? Everyone missed it. I carried it much further in Exsess. You may also recall relevant material in PHOTOGRAPHIC WHITEWASH.

There is but one point on which we have any disagreement, and here it is in degree and emphasis, having two parts. None of the things you say of Warren personally is unjustified, none at all extreme. However, in saying what is so right about Rankin, you fall short of saying enough. The one point at which I do not allege unfairness but it could be alleged by Warren's defenders is in his insistence on sticking to the agenda, for he did return to that matter later, in a different context, and what he then directed be done wasn't done. What I am suggesting is that the introduction to WHITEWASH remains correct in its assessment of and division of responsibility between Commission and staff and that what to me is a proper interpretation of the executive sessions affirms this. I am not saying that Warren or the members are without responsibility, or that they must not bear all the responsibility for the work they signed. I am saying they were manipulated and did not control or even direct the investigation, that on the rare occasion when they tried they couldn't, and that, as I believed from the first and indicated for the first time in PW, Rankin was the most evil of the evil geni and the one who did exercise the control and did direct and misdirect. It was from my own personal experience with such bodies that I anticipated this would be the case. Thus, until I could unload on him heavily in a single area, I gave Rankin little attention so things would not become unavailable. I had asked for all the withheld transcripts and had been denied them as it is, with the special interpretations that sometimes were made of my requests. When they couldn't do this, as with the GSA - estate contract, they just exercised raw power. In each case they awaited the appearance of a fink of the gullible ignorant, so the material would be misused and the edge taken off it.

Someday you'll be here and we can explore this and other things at greater length. Meanwhile, congratulations on an excellent analysis. Sincerely,

