

1304 - Confidential

4/23/71

Dear Mary,

In the rush with which I do something, too often I may forget details. Because I had heard so little from you recently, I fear I didn't send you copies of my letters to Boggs. As soon as he spoke out I did write him, suggesting and offering to prove that he and the members of the Commission were had, mostly by Hoover and the FBI. I also sent a similar letter to an editorial writer on the Washington Post. And I did give this correspondence, as I usually do when things not urgently confidential are involved. As you know, you have chided me for my openness, and I presume you are aware of the contrary fiction rather carefully foisted by others.

Not until Boggs' speech yesterday and the rather inadequate electronic-media response (I've not yet seen the a.m. papers), did it suddenly come to me that, as in the past, some of the well-meaning underinformed among us might take this idea and seek to exploit it for their own purpose, which in all earlier cases are so executed as to eliminate me. Inter alia this is usually self-justified with the concealing fiction that I consider that I have a monopoly, don't share or ~~might~~ confide, etc. Some of those that I have detected in the past and frustrated would shake you if you knew the details, and they involve people you know well. One, with a cheap effort to exploit the Army intelligence business after receipt of my letters, would have been a real disaster and would have helped get those rascals off the hook.

Whether or not this has happened with Boggs, as I consider probable based on the past, the possibility exists and I'm confident that among those to whom I sent my letters and those with whom they have close association, it is inevitable that something of this kind has been done. I do not think there is one of us who could undertake this on any large scale without consultation with a few of the others, and this includes me both ways: that I should subject my proposals and work to critical analysis and comment of others with sufficient knowledge (of which there are but few) and that no other should undertake to do this without asking me to go over it. A simple mistake, such as had made and repeated after I corrected it in the spectacle suit, could here become a major disaster. Boggs would be ruined, the whole thing would go up in smoke, all criticisms of the FBI would be dismissed as invalid and irresponsible, and we'd be set back that much more. I do fear this.

After I read his speech of yesterday I'll be writing him again. I fear that any elaborate approach, aside from being unnecessary for his present purposes, complicates his life, makes his real comprehension impossible, and is needlessly vulnerable. Hurting him personally today would be, aside from a great unkindness, an enormous disservice and would, I fear, permanently turn off the few members of the Commission who might, in time, be helpful to us.

However, I apologize for not having sent you my correspondence, for then, if you'd heard of anything of this sort afoot, you'd know its original inspiration and its potential for real if entirely unintended harm.

I fear our own greatest hazard continues to be those with great ambition to succeed, the best intentions in the world, and a woefully inadequate knowledge of fact that is combined with foolish, sometimes paranoid, preconceptions to which every single thing is contorted to fit. We'll be lucky to survive ourselves.

Hope you are all well.

Sincerely,