

Dear Howard,

8/30/72

We had an assortment of in-town letters this a.m. I read your letter to SM of 8/27 in about three snatches. I think I remember it well enough to make some comment without rereading and have enough time before lunch but not for other work requiring longer continuity.

By and large I think it is an excellent analysis. I am glad you did not take what now would be a counter-productive line, combining that I warned explicitly against what happened with the questions of the motives of others. As I have often told you, split milk is for cats. Our problems are how to eliminate such things and how to find some use for what they yield. There is no adverse event that hasn't had angles we could use for constructive purposes. It is to that that we should now address ourselves, in my view the "our" also being considerably fewer.

Because you sent carbons to RB and the letter to SM, I'll also carbon them. Because you raise the point about CW's not returning your call for so long, I think it might help SM's understanding of what she might be unwilling to believe of CW to tell her what my files show on this, that he asked me to call him reverse, giving me a special number, that he then was not in and never returned the calls, and actually later said he had but I was not in when for a long period of time I was never away and move the phone outside when we are outside. You might be able to correlate this with what information he had by then gotten from me and whether he might logically expect to have gotten more without something from him by way of good-faith showing. To this I think it would be helpful to her willingness to believe what will not be either easy or pleasant that Cyril did refuse to be a witness for me in a suit for some of the related material, having earlier led me to believe he would help in this and other ways, and finally said it was because he was making too much money and didn't want to give up more of the possibilities for increasing his wealth. You might include how long ago it was that I anticipated the current thing, not so much to say I was right but in a limited context, the suggestion I made to CW for us to work together on a perfectly safe approach that had none of the liabilities inherent in this, and his failure to respond. She may have had this from me, may not credit it, and you know of that offer and I later discussed the entire approach with you. I do not want details of this given at this point, but the fact and your estimate of its worthwhileness or lack of it might be helpful to her and to RB.

You do a kind of analysis of the troubles we have with the combination of Cyril and Graham. As far as you go I think it is excellent. You do not carry some of what you deal with as far as is possible, perhaps by choice and for time pressures. You should, however, be aware of more than that there was falsehood, that there was more falsehood than you listed, and that I told Graham more than eight months ago that this is exactly what he would do and that it would be contrived to look honest whereas it would be false and of such intent. You heard that. So, it is more than just bad, it is the following of a deliberate design by "the other side", easily seen in advance if one but wanted to. In short, there is more wrong with this than you say, and others as well as you should understand this. There is new hazard in what Cyril is now up to, as you do not completely explain. Where you do it is limited, as with front entrance. I do agree that Cyril's handling was a shock to me because the one thing of which I was completely without doubt, despite my past experiences, where I could without difficulty attribute incompetence to other things, is his incredible incompetence in this entire matter as reflected to this point. I'm learning from the past and going no further. You know what is in the new last part of PM and know that I have more I could not include. The incompetence is monumental.

But the main point I want to make, and in making it suggest that if Sylvia is still ill it can have therapeutic value to her, is that we should now be trying to figure out any good uses we might be able to make of this mess. There are some. You are aware of some of my initiatives, as is everyone I want to know at this point. I'm not about to undertake to cope with new "good conscience" problems. I think there are possibilities, and if there are those who can see what I do not, I'd sure like to know. I think by now everyone has enough reason to consider that before anything is done with anything like this I should be at least consulted, for various reasons. One is knowledge, which exceeds yours, the next in completeness. Another is not to cross up what is already in the works, of which others do not know. Let us respect the Sprague/CTIA monopoly on this kind of stupidity. One of the things that now interests me even more is anything at all on Marshall, including anything that can advance my understanding of the unique genius he applied to making a bigger and new and unnecessary scandal/mess at Chappaquiddick.

Hastily,