

Dear Dave,

12/27/93

For the past several days the memo I'd just added a bit to when you phoned yesterday tells you what was on my mind and led me not to do any writing. I've been reading instead, unrelated reading. When I laid the book down a few moments ago the criticism of your Reeves review came to me. I'd thought a bit about it after we spoke. I think I have time for a few thoughts before I leave, late, for the blood test I think I'd better not postpone, means letting car warm up first, not stopping for the papers and the mail box, with how warm the car is when I leave the lab controlling whether I got for p.t. with snow showers having begun again. If there is no wind 15 is a bit much for me now anyway.

If you were to write a 500 word review of a book on Alexander the Great, with such a ~~few~~ career, should you have used some of those few words for an account of his bisexuality? If the review was of a book on Ike, some of those ^{few} words should be used on this public affair with his chauffeur, a WAC. If on Grover Cleveland, should they have been used to report that he had a bastard when he ran and did not married the bastard's mother until he was President? If the book were on Sumner ^{Wells} ~~Weeks~~ and his important career in the State Department, that required an account of his homosexuality?

What really is the function of the historian, particularly when he reviews a book for fellow historians and students?

Is it to be politically acceptable as at that time what is or has become politically acceptable is understood? Is it to fall in line, sieg heil! and not report anything else?

Is he to evaluate a President and his presidency in terms of its actual, accomplishments and failures or is it to become a scandal monger, of the cheapest and most dubious scandals?

Do you really believe that he sent money to the ^{mafia} ~~mafia~~ through that woman whose ~~giver~~ given so many different and contradictory stories of their relationship? Do you really think that if any money had been involved, he would have known about it, that those who did it would not have preserved deniability for him? IF they did it? Mayor Dailey did not deliver the Cook County vote? And ~~it~~ did the GOP not appeal it because that ~~we~~ ^{was} below them? Or were they afraid of what could emerge with the vote in Southern Illinois?

Kennedy had a record that too many want to ignore to be in ^{goose} ~~in~~ step with the revisionism that is so generously rewarded.

He did become a different President after his learning experience ^{of the} ~~of the~~ Cuba Missile Crisis.

He did engaged in a lengthy correspondence with ^{hrischve} ~~hrischve~~ looking toward working toward peace.

He did resolve that crisis without enflaming the world, as his many advisers believed was the right thing to do, ^{go to war.}

He did begin detente. And he did try to reduce the waste of our future in military

wastefulness that begot more ^{my} military wastefulness at the cost of our future. *Look at our present!*

His was the initiative for the limited test-band agreement.

He had the civil rights act introduced.

And as President he did many other good things, as he also started to get the people to thinking of living in a world at peace in which they ^{and their} then adversaries were breathing the then contaminated air they had to agree to clean up.

Nicholas Hoffman writes, in paraphrase, that Lee Harvey Oswald is the best thing that happened to JFK. ^{Why} Should that opinion be included in a 500 word review?

Barton J. Bernstein writes that he spent five day checking material in only 52 pages of Reeves book. Commenting on Reeves' criticism of his review he says that the real problem he sees with that book is its "very substance." He says it displays "frequent carelessness, rewritten quotations and seemingly invented dialogue and scene fragments. Trusting readers relying on this book are akin to people walking on quicksand."

To check those mere 52 pages Bernstein says he reviewed ^{over} 1200 pages of archival documents, transcripts, and unpublished oral histories."

Have you any such basis for what you wrote me? Are you not in fact becoming a partisan rather than an editor ^{or historian}?

Has not all this determination to rewrite the Kennedy Presidency become the proof of the wisdom of Shakespeare's words, the good if oft interred with our bones?

Leaving nothing else for those with the very profitable, commercially and academically rewe rewriting of our history.

You and your journal can, of ^{course}, become part of that.

But I will not