

5/20/73

Dear Dick,

I've been Watergate working, catching up on filing (in such haste some may be beyond retrieval!) and writing. I took enough time off between rains to cut some grass, but if I loose ~~##~~ 50 strawberry plants, five raspberry bushes and a fig treat, it will be Nixon who did that, too. (By the way, I have a magnificent poster, a takeoff on a Nixon campaign slogan. It is a photograph of a very pregnant black woman holding her belly under the caption, **NIXON'S THE ONE!** If I can find someone who will copy photographically, I'll have copies small enough for people to have.)

Writing a book of this kind ^{without an outline} is not as difficult as it seems. I have found in the past under similar circumstances that it can help outline the overall in the mind. And it gets things done. You know what Che said, "The duty of the writer is to make with the writing".

Today I completed a chapter with a long title, "The New Nixon and the Old ~~NIXON~~ Nixon are One, the Watergating Nixon." I plan to follow it with "Clean As a Hound's Tooth", Ike's ecstatic excess when the Checkers speech worked. The New-Old chapter is his political history, which is all Watergating, except for the Checkers speech, which will begin the financial-irregularities chapter, "Clean As". (Did you know that the Original Nixon broke into the Dean's office in law school?)

I didn't quite finish this chapter. Almost. It necessarily deals with people I knew, like the first guy he beat, Jerry Voorhis, so I did use first-person stuff. But in a way that bluepencils out, without revision being required. My main purpose was to give and suggest authentication of fact and establishment of personal credentials. I guess I'll do this also in dealing with the FBI. (Did you know that I lived with a large crew of agents for four months on a major case of the day? and where it was so dangerous six of the defendants were assassinated beginning the day after the night I left. I could say I did but I won't say that or the rest in the book!). Also with the CIA, having been in OSS. In part the decision was because I can't avoid it with Hunt anyway, particularly if I sue over that, as I'm trying to do.

While I'd be reluctant to use an incomplete, unread rough draft as a specimen, more than most because of the terrible typing, I do have this now, too.

Now I've got to get time to write the Dell stuff out for you. Meaning for me.

There are other things I can't entirely ignore. I have reduced them to the degree possible. Pray that nothing happens to James Earl Ray, for I have "solved" that case and he is in danger. I'm still accumulating evidence on that and if he gets killed there will be a fast and very sensational book. I regret to say that he is in danger.

You will make your own judgement and any publisher will make his own, too. I told you I was enclosing the flattering comment of a mature and experienced friend who has been au courant with what I've been doing and who, with his wife, has been helping. This time I do. I sent him a copy of the long letter I wrote you as soon as I got home. He has made some comment that I repeat because of their experience all around the world as an AP correspondent: "Your book has the sound of great potential, especially if you write your own book from your own special material. There'll probably be dozens of them, but one of them can be written only by you...In any case, I think you are correct in choosing a broader approach, showing that the WC incident is merely one bodl that burst [think I'll steal that for a chapter title!], not the basic sickness by any means. The inevitable result is authoritarianism, which is the real enemy. The CIA is merely one expression of this trend, and is a menace because it is not accountable and because it illegally engages in domestic operations. It will have to be a continuing part of your story, but need not assume such proportions that the result tends to exculpate our Glorious Leader...GL has no qualms about using it...And the CIA was only one among many of the tools he has used. ...You mention the horrible problem of writing a book about a breaking story. Actually, you've chosen the

only practical way of handling such a problem - subordinate the breaking story to a larger theme, which is better perspective anyway and should, in the end, carry far greater impact. You know that on one else can write the book you can write. Lay on, Mac Duff."

Some reporters can reach retirement and be the same dumdums they were as cubs. This man reported for AP all around the world, including Washington (and China, too). He and his wife are two of the wisest people I've ever known, including the countless politicians and government officials. Perhaps his independent expressions will have conveyed the concept and the problem better than I did. Certainly this is more succinct. It tells you why I'm reluctant to give a chapter outline or any to which I'd be firmly bound. I can't visualize anything that would make a major change in what I have in mind, including resignation. What I do not have in mind is organization and structure (final, that is, not general) and what I'll leave out. There is already much too much material, all relevant. Resignation, which still seems unlikely, will not surprize me. His resignation speech is in my notes, as were several of his others before he made them.

Reluctance to present an outline that might well require changing and before it is clear enough to me is one of the reasons I said I'd take a gamble if you recommend it. One of the minor costs we can't bear is Lil's having to give up her summer's work to retype in a rush. She is one of two people keeping the Block office open during the off season. It ruins three days, but the guarantee is only about \$50. Without a fat advance we could not afford even this small loss. She would have some time for which she is not now paid on other days, when she does some bookkeeping, but by the time there would be enough to retype, she'll have the several messes under control. Of course, time for which she is not now being paid represents no cash loss if she spends it on the book. As a matter of fact, although she has not been able to keep up with either the story or what I've been doing with it, she'd make a valuable research assistant and I'll miss those services very much. They will cost time.

I've decided to eliminate footnotes. Instead, where necessary, I'll have the sources in the draft and eliminate them in retyping.

In any event, until there is a firm negative, I'll plug away whenever I can find any time at all. In part this is because I do believe the book I write will be the one that will be different, the one with a context and the right context, the one that will be other than a rewrite of what has been well publicized. To this I add the one that has the capability of being the deciding thing with resignation or impeachment or worse.

Initially it will have to be longer than optimam. You know from our com on past that I'll raise no cutting problems. (God, what awful judgement Ann used in cutting out all that beautiful and then and now significant FBI stuff on those Cuban camps! But I didn't make noises.)

If you do get a publisher and he does go for my way of almost overnighting a hardback, remember it will save him much money and is not patentable, so think of how there can be something in that for you and me.

In the usual rush, let me not forget to remember Jill and the boys,

with best,

5/17/73

Dear Dick,

Prior to your call this afternoon I had addressed this envelope to your home because you told me you would not move your office until after two weeks. I had expected to write you of other things. However, after almost 15 hours of work today (and I've not yet read the morning papers on the Watergate) I'm too weary for them and instead will address some of the things that may at any moment be required knowledge for you. Perhaps this is a bad way of putting it because I will be giving estimates and opinions.

I do not see Publishers' Weekly and would appreciate copies of anything it carries on projected or contracted books on this subject. In part my interest is that of the possible publisher. I'm old fashioned enough to believe that my interest lies in serving him as honestly as I can.

The Glass House tapes has been kicking around for more than a year. Lengthy excerpts were printed in the Los Angeles Free Press. Unless there has been a radical change, it is not a Watergate book but is the interview of a guy named Freed with a former black police fink named Louis Tackwood, on whom I have a large file, dealing with his finking. He did say, long before any of this, that violence was to be police provoked at the San Diego GOP convention and that he was to be part of it. I recall nothing else relevant. Freed did a novel with Mark Lane titled Executive Action. It is due from Dell soon with a large printing. That Dell doesn't go for this, unless I misunderstood you, is a sign of their estimate of the work. Especially with Dalton Trumbo doing a movie script. After the taping of the Tackwood interviews, Freed has aligned himself with a series of nuts, some quite sincere, but all of whom I know extremist irrationally on the Watergate and assassinations subjects. I am familiar with their stuff. They make it up as they go.

The Impeachment of Nixon is the title of an irresponsible book, for that is not yet upon us. You know my estimates of this and they are not as new as my giving them to you a week ago. But there is a difference between publishing a book and offering an opinion. The alternative is that the title is a comeon. That would not be needed with a solid book.

I do not recall the other two you mentioned.

Hunt was working on two books before his arrest. I don't know his progress. Or his state of mind. My estimate of him is that it is not conducive to rapid completion of his manuscripts. Especially not from inside one of the viler jails. Neither is a Watergate book. One is on the Bay of pigs, his self-justification. The other is one of his many cheap thrillers. Putnam is doing the thriller, Arlington House the political pap.

John Starr, who is not listed in the current LMP, is handling ^{Henry} Rothblatt (Watergate Cubans' lawyer) novel done with Argosy editor Milton Machlin. The title, Nighthawk, is said to be a disguise for Watergate. It can't have substance.

Frank Mankiewicz, who presided over those parts of the McGovern disaster he did not engineer, is doing an analysis for Quadrangle. Considering what the investigation over which he presided turned up, which is much less than I did without leaving home - if it turned up anything - I'd expect the book to be a scholarly nothing. I have some familiarity with the depositions and they show no real investigation.

Clark Mollenhoff and the two Post reporters will do solid work and they both should be well done. Bantam will have Clark's fast if he does it fast. But if he does it will be a pot-boiler. More, an incomplete one. He should have good personal stuff on his personal experiences in the White House, until even he could take it no longer. When last he spoke of this he defended Nixon and carried a burning iron for Ziegler. Not knowing he was doing a book I gave him some leads. I have heard nothing from him about them since. If he and the Post boys, both of whom I know and both of whom have copies of my earlier memos on this and a few of my files, do no more than rewrite their stories, what kind of books will they produce? S & S will at some future date hardback Woodward and Bernstein's.

influence a publisher, who knows the gold doesn't come from mines but from trash-heaps. However, this is in every way an exceptional subject. If Clark has completed his book it is a dated nothingness before publication. If he has not, despite Bantam's best efforts, and I know how good they can be, only its being alone will sell it. What happened to their The Strange Case of James Earl Ray, by Clay Blair, is what I think will be repeated. It was blasted as a not particularly good rehash and it flopped hard and fast. And it had no competition. If Clark ignores the newest and most sensational developments, what will be said of his book? If he doesn't, how fast can it be expected? And this, I think, is a subject on which anything not solidly responsible will not be well received. The liberal journals, remember, are those leading the defense of Nixon and pretending he had no personal knowledge, later amended to except, maybe, the covering up.

One of the reasons I delayed making any kind of an approach to anyone is because I anticipated all of this and more. I have been working on this since it happened and have, except for fine details, been ahead on everything. My understanding was this good: predictions of what would happen and would come out were in the hand of friends before they did. And they did, too. I will enclose a paragraph from a friend who has just retired after a lifetime as an AP reporter, all around the world. It relates to my judgement on this matter only, not on publishing prospects. It may not interest a publisher, but it will tell you that I have been on top before the top came to a head and may have influenced developments. On the other hand, it may tell a publisher that perhaps I do understand what I am talking about.

However, my major problem was conceiving a viable book that would satisfy me on its worth. The concept I have given you is not new. What is new is my conviction that it now will not frighten reviewers or the responsible press. It took more than Goldwater to persuade me. Now even conservative and respectable Senators are using my description of eleven months ago, deepest subversion. Joe Kraft is saying in his column that Nixon, Ziegler et al are part of the cancer. Or, the concept is now acceptable. It is, to me, only the logical progression of what I wrote five years ago and had to be edited out of Frame-Up. I underestimated only the speed of developments, and there my underestimation was serious. Substitute Authoritarianism for Fascism in the title and the respectables are now saying exactly that. However, Mollenhoff and one of the two Posters are conservatives, and they will not say this. The Posters, who have conflicting political views, will not be able to agree on a political line. And most of all what this subject will need is context, explanation of meaning. Nothing in recent history, if anything in the past, has had the exposure this subject is going to get. It has begun. So, much of the reason for anyone buying a book will be gone. If the book can't be billed and sold as what has not been said by the papers, what has not been on the tube or in the trial and hearings, there should be a reasonable expectation that it will not sell well. On the other hand, if it can be so presented, then all of this extraordinary exposure should be free advertising for that book. I think this is the one I, and I think I alone, have in mind.

At the same time, the formula I am developing is the only one of which I can think that gets around what can happen, even Nixon being offed. Let new details come out, they won't effect the book, except possibly to increase sales. They can't kill it. Remember, I have written and published millions of words on topical matters, breaking stories, and not once have developments upstaged me. None of my work is yet dated. Nor, for that matter, has anyone added substantially to it. So, I have some experience in writing successfully around breaking stories.

If I were not as strapped as I am, financially and with urgent personal needs, I could produce this book so fast, subject to the kind of editing I have never had and always wanted, that a hardback could be out as fast as a paperback. I have done it. Maybe a publisher would not consider it, but I think it would help sell a fast book and at hardback price. And at lower cost than the usual hardback. Meaning more profit.

Is it possible that this is the only formula that has movie possibilities? The rest is public domain.

You know I do not compromise with principle. So, despite the proposed title, I say I think this book will neither offend nor turn off conservatives. I really mean this, and not as a gimmick.

Despite the success of my personal investigation, I was and I remain, essentially, an analyst. It is for this that I was really used in intelligence. It is this that really enables the success of my investigations, for it tells me what to go for, where it is and how to get it.

In honesty I must also tell you that in some ways this is tougher than the assassinations writing. I am now 60. I am a vigorous 60 (and will be if I can find time for some exercise after a relative/sedentary winter). I can and do still work a long day. However, this book will have to depart more from the fact, and that will slow things or contribute to confabulation, where I will not have on paper what is in the mind and should be on paper. Today we also have more and more severe pressures, including of time and relating to what is important to us, serious litigation. I nonetheless believe that with an agreement and minimal assistance I can turn out a good book fast, but one that should be edited with thoughtfulness and care.

Meanwhile, I do have to take in the broadcasts of the hearings, and that does slow things down. Yet today, while taking in all six broadcast hours, I also did the memo I had to send the ACLU, perhaps 4,000 words. And I caught up on some of the back materials on this and filed them for later retrieval.

While I am now much more certain of the essential content than I was a week ago and have started reorganizing files that way, it is still premature to do an outline. While this means you have nothing to show, don't be afraid personally because I've never had time to outline my other books, all of which were written under great time pressures and with extraordinary speed. I can give a rudimentary outline of parts now but not the whole thing. Developments may suggest latering the arrangement of chapters, too, but with this kind of material that is no real problem.

Sincerely,

P.S. on Time: If the first day is a fair sample, the Senate hearings will run much longer than planned. The man running them is a lawyer, not an organizer. He is unaware of the simple

positive
efficiencies I practiced 37 years ago. The GOP members show every sign of firm detachment from Nixon and the White House, have done their home work, and give strong indications of doing a thorough job. Their own political futures and that of their party depends upon their convincing everyone of their honesty and sincerity in this matter. So, they will question more and that will take time. I believe that those who see their best interest in talking will talk more than is now expected, and what they confess about themselves and others will lead to more questioning, if not also to more witnesses. While the committee could take a break and resume hearings later, I think they'll want to use the hearings to pressure the reluctant prosecution. Or, run longer than now scheduled.