

10/22/73

Dear Dick,

If being a prophet is not the same as being a successful author, I remind you of my forecast in answer to your questions this past May. And if at this minute it does not appear that any personal benefit will accrue, it is not only in the 90,000 words my wife has retyped but in the perhaps 20,000 awaiting her of the draft and at least 10,000 of snatches earlier written that no developments of the past months require any changes. As of today I see no need to make any change in the planned structure, although I am trying to write so sequences can be changed easily and cutting can be with a shears and a blue pencil.

When they are polite, agents are so very polite they leave uncertainty. Thus my enclosed letter to your friend Shepherd.

I believe I sent you carbons of the hasty advance writing I did the day I mailed it, or the night and the day before. If you have kept up with the news, you know how accurately I saw in advance and how accurate my estimate was. If we do not now know what caused Nixon do do what he has just done at the precise moment he did it - and he would have had to do it anyway - the most probable immediate cause is what lies behind the Hughes bit I did - more than two months ago, when the Sebate committee was engaged in its own covering up.

The new stuff I had remains entirely new, so there will be much in this book that has never appeared in any paper. It is, of course, a serious problem that making these unprecedented things comprehensible requires that a book be many books written as one.

However, I am writing this under the worst circumstances ever, for me at least. Our financial situation is past deperate, and we are 60. And it is at once more diffuse and more complex than even the assassination material.

Barring the unforeseen, I expect the completed draft to run about 600 big pages. For most ~~good~~ books this is much too large, I know. But when I have no publisher, I also have in mind making an historical record. And I don't think any publisher will in a last-minute rush ask for anything not in the draft.

Having no advance, my wife has to work. She has parttime employment which denies me a research assistant, limits the time she has for typing, and three days a week requires that I go to and from town twice each day.

I can't help thinking about our plight, and that also intrudes on my work. When I get to thinking and worrying, I wonder about your silences and your not having done anything about the legal matters. When Manny is your friend and I can't get a word from him and I don't want to hurt him, I worry about that, too. I know some of it was not impossible because on my own I have resolved a few of the minor ones. I now have in my possession all the "remainders" of Farme-Up and I have been offered a settlement by ~~utton~~. And in thinking of all of this when I would much prefer to be doing constructive work, other things come to mind. Before Meredith sold its book publishing to Hawthorn, the president wrote me that he would be settling with you. That was long ago, and collection then was automatic, if the amount was not. There was a contract. To date I haven't gotten a penny. I don't know if you have ever had to worry about such matters. I hope not. They're more serious when from age and a long record of fighting fascism one is unemployable.

I mentioned to you the book The Informers that I was turning over to a lawyer friend. I don't recall what your opinion of its prospects was. He has completed a chapter and is preparing an outline. I will continue on this.

Sincerely,

Rt. 8, Frederick, Md. 21701
10/22/73

Dear Mr. Shepherd,

When last I heard from you, you expressed misgivings about the thrust of several hasty rough and unread drafts I sent you as samples of what I would be saying and what I do believe and expressed the opinion that the project upon which I had engaged was beyond the capability of any one man. Perceptively, you commented that I was preparing a bill of indictment.

Reaction to the weekend's developments make me less of a political minority. I suspect I will remain a literary minority of one.

If it may not be relevant except in providing me with credentials, these developments and the reaction to them do, I believe, validate my approach. The samples I sent you two months ago are in the current headlines. One may have triggered these developments which would have been inevitable anyway.

With no contract and no encouragement, I have been forced into the position of writing an even larger book because I have no way of knowing what any publisher might want and might not. I feel I have to include everything that may be desired here and abroad to face the easier problem, elimination rather than addition.

To date my wife has retyped about 90,000 words of what I have written. And as of today, there is but a single page that requires any change because of any developments, a simple change because one witness placed a small limitation on what had been attributed to him. As of today, no alterations are required in what I plan for the rest of the book. Additions but no alteration in doctrine.

Much has happened since your August letter. That there have been all these developments without requiring any change in what I have written and without requiring any change in what I have yet to write encourages me to believe that an all-encompassing book is not impossible and if necessarily a long one, is the one kind of book that can make this incredibility comprehensible.

In the near future I plan to file at least two suits for suppressed information under the Freedom of Information law. I believe I am the first writer to use it and am the one who has used it most and most successfully. The United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia will be handing down a decision in one of these suits any day now. The Department of Justice asked for an en banc rehearing after decision was in my favor. The decision is being typed now. The original decision was the lead article in the publication of the New York bar this past May. This case will go to the Supreme Court however the immediate decision goes, so there will be a continuing possibility of public attention to me and my writing. I do not know what, if any attention my two Watergate suits will get. One should unbag some of Nixon's cats.

My purposes are to report and to inquire. My belief that the project is not impossible is supported by an editor friend who has read 200 pages. I'll continue writing as rapidly as continuing research permits. Your letter left unclear whether, when I have the draft completed, I might submit it to you. I have made and I plan making no other approaches. However, what may follow them more than these new developments themselves suggest that I should be thinking ahead.

The double entendre of the title dating to May, Watergate:Fascism's Floodgate, now seems closer to resolution.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg