

Dear Dick,

Another update

2/21/76

If this were a year ago I'd not be writing you, instead I'd finish the last chapter of the second part of the book before going to bed. I'm writing because I'm keyed up by the ~~stix~~ writing and hope to unwind before trying to sleep without a pill. (In four months I've not used up the supply with which I left the hospital.)

This is the last chapter of the second part, the ninth chapter. As I told you, temporarily I've skipped the second. I've begun and outlined the eighth. I'm probably going to take a clear day and listen to tapes on interviews for it. They'll be more real than the in-court use made of those interviews. I don't know how much of which I'll use for sure but five were made inside maximum-security jails. I want to think and then select, to hold it down. It is beginning to look like the uncut draft will run to 150,000 words, depending on how much more I get from the government.

Considering the kind of work it has been progress is, I think, excellent. I had to go to Washington one day for those ~~jobst~~ supports Dr. Segal recommended. (Made to order, out of town.) And the Playboy consultancy has been an enormous time-consumer and aggravation. They are still working on the galleys of the issue that was to have gone to press yesterday. The articles editor may fly in unannounced yet this weekend, they have that many of those kinds of troubles. I've more than earned this one! But by now they've learned so much they call me about everything. Today, a Saturday, for an hour.

Some time next week it should be over. I have a college convocation speech to make next week. It requires an early-morning plane, I'm not driving that far, so we're trying to lean on the government, which was to have had material for me to go over earlier this week, to have it ready for the day before. I'll do it then if I can, spend the night in Washington, and get enough sleep. I also expect my Newsday friend this coming week. However, I'll finish this chapter tomorrow and filling in the other two and reading the unread, which is most, permits more flexibility. Unless I can figure a structure for the second chapter I may let it wait entirely. My friend may come up with more. Not that it isn't already hot stuff. If I can anticipate, and if it doesn't rain my walking time will be my thinking time, when I've finished this I'll go back and start it.

For reasons I won't go into now your suggestion that this be ~~more~~ personal as well as first-person is turning out to be a good idea. If any of this breaks we'll be covered. An example is this latest chapter, which builds to the mysterious death of the original judge. It is my work but the fink Memphis co-counsel blabbed to a scandal-sheet stringer. His problem right now is libel, but he may figure a way around it. Only he also won't have the whole story.

No typist yet. Otherwise I think good progress. Best,