

Dear Robert,

5/11/75

In what follows I assume that while there may be different intentions in the minds of those involved and that people can misunderstand each other, what I was told is, if not exactly true, close to it.

Yesterday, after telling me earlier in the week that he would be in touch with me, the London Sunday Times' Washington correspondent did phone. In the course of the conversation he told me that his paper had bought the rights to the Zapruder film from you. Unless you are the agent for Zapruder's heirs, they can have dire consequences

You should understand that I have had a friendly relationship with this Times for a decade, going back to 1965, when their then chief US correspondent, now American editor in London, tried on his own to get Whitewash printed. He even interceded with Wiggins personally on the WPoast after a less than honest story. One who left their staff only recently, a man whose family had supplied editors for years, is one of my best friends. You and they are both my friends.

Can you begin to imagine the position in which this surprise report put me in?

As always, however, I resolve these conflicts in favor of truth.

There are two other aspects that disturb me. First when I am always available to you and even to the degree that does not compromise my integrity backstop you, that you would engage in anything bearing even a close relationship to this report without talking to me is worrisome. As recently as the day before, when there were people here whose time and presence were potentially valuable to me and to all of us, I took all the time you wanted to prepare you for the Gordon/Spitz confrontation. Prior to that, even though weaker than I can remember, I agreed to go to "etroit, which means nothing to me personally, to help you out on this Gordon show. A long history tells you that I am always available to you. (And if it works, you will also know that one of the endeavors in which I was engaged when you called was to give you more credibility in the weakest part of your current comments. To this end I parted with only copies of pictures, something I had sworn not to do ever again.) The other is that you would engage in what can be considered fraud within the law without any checking of any kind, insofar as I know; and without getting the relevant information, relevant to definitive use of the film, to go with what could be a major story in a paper of influence.

What this seems to boil down to, aside from the possible contamination of your recent associations, is the question of staying inside your own britches.

You have known for years that a major drain on and waste of my time has been offsetting the crazies and the evil potential of their operations, regardless of the character and intent as they conceive intent. That without speaking to me when I am so debilitated particularly when you had me on the phone - engage in so dubious a venture was, whether you thought of it or not, to submerge me even more into the utterly needless when there is so much of potential value for which I can't find time.

I am always ready to help you. There is a limit to what can be attributed to the film. From the beginning of your Richter venture I have always offered to help once I had assurance that it was a responsible project. I have always cautioned you that the film alone could not do the job and the record establishes this. When I was so sick in New York I said things I did not intend to and now learn I had phone conversations I don't recall, I did come to your help at that press conference. Have you the slightest idea what the tough NYC press corps could have done to you if I had not taken the heat off you with the destructions in the original film and the citation of my earlier work (to which you never make reference) about a man on the knoll and Itak's confirmation? Here you'd best understand what can still happen to you if the feds start using some of their tough finks for questioning you. I'd had dozens of this and you can end with a real disaster if you are not more careful and more circumspect.

Shawcross will be in touch again. Please, immediately, in writing or on tape give me a full account so I may be prepared. Best to all, even you!