12/14/71

Dear Gary,

With luck, I will have cleaned up all the things that accumulated during my long trip by lunchtime. There was too much that I had had to lay aside when I left, and that is next priority. The legal part in particular will get my mind off of these things for a while. I must find some mechanism for juggling two balls, for I should do the relatively little now needed to complete POST MORTEM BEFORE THE CONTENTS OF THE TWO EARLIER PARTS ARE FURTHER from my mind. I have no prospects of immediate publication in commercial channels and less for getting it printed privately now, but I regard it as the most important and promising thing we have had since the beginning, when any viable work was important. Also, I can't linger on any one thing for I have so many to do, all, I believe, started and all, save for the commercial prejudices, important. Thus, while our personal interests require that I concentrate on the legal problems, I feel I must find some time to at least finish PM, on which I had to put in so much time recently. Finishing it, aside from the mechanical work of changing the tapes on the appendix pages of the two earlier parts so they will be unyellowed and compiling the new part of the appendix, means writing a short final chapter for the panel part and completing the intro and conclusions so Lil can retype them. Were it not for all the other things, this would not be a serious matter.

I have a little to add as a result of this trip. I'll probably do it at the end of one or two chapters, depending on how these chapters are now organized. Because the new last part has to be repaged anyway, that is, correct numbers have to be added, this also is a minor problem, mechanically.

This explanation is preface to telling you what you are to remind me of when you are here (and we'd still like to know approximately when that can be so we can arrange to keep ourselves free at that time). There is always so much to talk about the brief periods we are together, it is easy to skip things, and one part in particular I do want to discuss with you, as I think I indicated while I was away. I don't want you to mention even the fact of it to Ned or anyone, for I don't want the zanies or the underinformed to be dogging those who have been my sources. So, in strictest confidence, I tell you two things: there is absolutely no doubt that the anterior neck wound was above the President's collar and that there was no damage to the front of the shirt or to the tie at the time he got to the hospital. Because I have this in the book already in a way that I think is close to entirely unassailable, rather than redo that chapter, for which we can t afford time, I'll be including this new proof at the end of that chapter or in notes at the end of the work. Second, there remains nothing to change what I've said of the left-temple wound. Not one but two doctors gave this opinion, and the effort one I interviewed made to change what he then said wound up an affirmation. These, I think you will recall, are two of the areas of disagreement with Ned. I do not now argue the importance they can be given or should be, I merely report fact. I learned many other medical things. If you are interested in them, I made handwritten notes about them promptly. If Lil hasn't had a chance to type these by the time you come, I'll be able to read them well enough to give you an idea of the totality of the undependability of the medical information produced at Bethesda. Even the simplest prodedures were misrepresented. The chest incisions, for example, were not because of subcutaneous emphesema but are a chlorectomy, as I recall the word. I do not recall the purpose.

There is much we can profitably learn from the recent unpleasantness. I hope we can and do so it will not be a total unpleasantness.

Meanwhile, if you have any suggestions based on your own reading, esp. of the newest part, I would welcome them as soon as possible, for going over any part after it has been done once is costly in time, taking time that should not be wasted. There is too much for which there is no time.

Perhaps by now you have done what I earlier asked, but if you haven't, I am disturbed that Ned has neither returned what I asked him to return nor responded in any way to my repeated requests, none of which should have been necessary. Best regards,