

18 January 1976

Dear Harold:

Steering Green's address is 5337 MacArthur Blvd, N.W.,
Washington, D.C. 20016.

As I recall it, I've not seen his ^{name} mentioned in AP material since he retired, perhaps a year after I did. I suspect he may have a full-time job, as he's a very capable financial writer and easily could command one if he needs or wants it. Also, I cannot say with certainty that he handled the Hoover leaks, but my impression has been that he was one of those whose name was an some of the stories.

This is to thank you and Lil for the backstopping stuff you have been sending from the Sunday Post. It's much appreciated. This includes the Valentine piece in Potomac, which naturally was read with great interest after first trying to make out just what disturbed you so much from all the memos you had sent along earlier on it. Frankly, I still don't fully see what the trouble is, but do understand that it is only one among many such things, including an article in ~~the~~ *Oui* which you've ~~also~~ also been objecting to, and many previous things which I won't try to specify here. At any rate, I certainly never got the impression that any of it was petty or without reason, and do understand that it's very serious business as far as both you and Lesar are concerned. Good luck to you both.

By now you are profoundly experienced with the failure of all the media to live up to their obligations to the public and the truth, and with the concomitant failure of individuals within the media to do the same thing. Yet somehow I get the feeling that you do not quite understand just why this happens. Perhaps a perspective from one who has been part of the establishment press might be useful, might supply some small angle which hasn't occurred to you.

The problem is the system. The media are part of the business establishment and, like business itself, are most comfortable when they can work in concert, or at least without too much friction, with the government establishment. The whole instinct is to be part of the establishment. Anything that upsets this tendency causes trouble. The reporter who digs up a story that will embarrass the establishment has to get it past his editor, who has to get it past his managing editor, who has to get it past his board of directors and/or owner, who is part of the business establishment and usually on good terms with government and wants to stay there for purely business reasons if not personal inclination.

Very early, every newsman has to make up his mind: he will be either a whore or a scrubwoman or get out of the field entirely. What individual newsmen do with hot stories depends upon what choice they've made along this line or have to make now, every time they're put on a hot story. There are gradations according to circumstances, but these are the principles involved. It is idle to expect either newsmen or news media to treat news solely on the basis of what is new and true. Too often this is the last thing taken into consideration. Everyone is under the gun. Unless you're willing to get out entirely, there is no escaping choices over which the individual often has no control whatever unless he is prepared to quit. Tough, but that's the way it is.

Best, *J* jdw

Dear Jim,

1/21/76

For various reasons this has been a joyless day. So, your letters of the 18th both so well thought out and put together, brought some light into it. I got a pretty decent walk in, came in with the paper, finished it up in a hurry while resting and then the mail came with the disagreeableness forced by the GHA letter. I swear if that medical administrator's wife asked for sex he'd refer her to the Claims Committee. However, what I learned in New York, of which I may have sent carbons, limits my options, patience and time. The latter in the sense of getting care, doing something about it or both.

Then it snowed, meaning no afternoon walk. Maybe meaning JL, who is due tomorrow, can't come. Not that much snow yet. But he lives in the city, has a garage and is better off using cabs than worrying about snow tires. Although the calendar call has been postponed we have to work on that case (king) when we can. So the medical will have to wait, with me giving him copies to read and keep.

Sometimes I actually enjoy the walks despite the discomfort, partly from what is on my mind and holds it and partly because I know they are good for me. There is a kind of satisfaction in being able to push myself until I stagger before turning around. I've learned to stop first, catch my breath and adjust to going down hill. But I've been trying to do this at least twice a day, so the snow disappoints unless it melts and the roads are not slippery.

Lil has arranged rides most days. While I welcome this time and saving of the mileage it also means that I'm denied the chance to walk where there is no snow. But we don't have that much of it so I won't miss much walking.

I'm also having to experiment, as I am now, to learn where a pressure spot inside the upper left thigh is made uncomfortable by having both legs up while I type. I'm beginning to think so.

Depending on the years, I imagine Green will remember Lou Nichols and Cartha De Loach. Thanks for the suggestion and the address.

Your three grafts say all there is to say about the media. And surviving it.

But I have no choice and sometimes I may it work. I'm more adjusted to the times it doesn't and I keep looking and trying. For the moment I'm encouraged with Newsweek. Got a nice and not necessary letter from the Newsday national editor today.

It is more difficult for me because in addition I have to pay for the sins of the others.

On the Potomac story my resentment was Bud's dismissing Jim, who has done all the work, as no more than a jovial legman while hogging all the credit none of which is due him. Since my first and angry reaction I've been troubled that Paul would write such a story because he knows the truth.

Your China letter is the best summary I've ever seen. I also have no pre-1970 knowledge. (I've not read the clips. I save them for rest periods that were fewer today and taken up with packaging. I was tempted to discuss the content with Whitten but felt I'd best not take the time. Their yesterday's column was good, so I then suggested on one that old OSS man Ho Chih Minh and perhaps Carlson. He liked both ideas.)

Interestingly all the commentary I saw was honest recognition of Chou. Including TV. I saw/heard nothing nasty. I think it represents more than that he is safely dead. Because this was one of the more important and fascinating developments in recent years I'd like to discuss this more than I will. I'm beginning to feel tiredness, later than last night or the one before. (And wouldn't you know it, both nights I got midnight calls that lasted!) However, I think it was inevitable, as was "detente." We've got three great powers all hating each other and each having to try to play the old British game of divide and rule. Each has ~~other~~ needs the other can meet. This is part of what makes our Angolan adventure so insane. It weakens us all around.

Perhaps the process was hastened a bit by Chinese assessment that Nixon would be bound to get into trouble. Getting out of VN was inevitable as was the unemployment it

meant. And our economy had been geared to war since the Great Depression. Our trouble was certain. Putting this another way, the question was days rather than years. It did not make any difference who was president, the situation could have varied only in degree. It simply isn't possible for us to produce an administration that without a major disaster causing it can dream or reordering national priorities and the economy. We live on waste that generates evil. Or, by evil that requires waste.

The survival of one who might change it is, as we have seen, not likely. (Tiger.)

If the best hope is the Congress, how much hope does it justify except on occasional issues, like FOIA.

Aside from the impossibility of any president in the current era being able to make a basic difference, look at the announced candidates. The one ray of promise is for the future at best, Mathias' effort to reorder the parties. There may be enough Republicans horrified at a choice between Ford and Reagan.

So, when China felt more secure vs Russia her time to move had come.

Unless Mao's death touches something off, my guess is that China's position, actually and relatively, is going to improve steadily. It is organized, moving and settled unless there is this kind of unsettling. Not true of either US or USSR, which has cast its seed upon the ground with enormous wastes in space with so much domestic need. The simplest needs, too. Same with such hurtful adventures as being first with SST, a real plague. I think they've blown it for years to come emulating Madison Avenue thinking, even if intended for prestige.

I'd like to carry this further. Not only because it has helped me work out of the mood I was in. But I'd best go to bed. I look forward to the amplification of the clips. Thanks for all.

Sincerely,