

1/11/71

Dear Dick,

Howard is here. He went into town with me this a.m. and read my mail, including ~~ing~~ your note of the 4th, letter of the 3rd, and 3rd to PH (I'm glad somebody had occasion to write him with moderation for I had to beat the shit out of him again, as you know, and I so regret the need, since amply confirmed, as HR has seen).

You are doing very well and exactly correctly with M. I think it will be helpful for more than your paper.

Howard has had a few different experiences this trip, and I think he has enjoyed them. Latest was not eavesdropping but the impossibility of avoiding a long conversation with the bastard I'm suing for non-payment on books, the reason I went to Wilmington, where I picked Howard up at the bus station before the scheduled and cancelled hearing (notification of which didn't reach me until today!). I don't think anyone would ever expect to hear such a conversation -and so long a one - between adversaries who are no longer adversaries, though they remain with conflicting interests. I won't take time for the unessential details, but at least an hour and probably closer to two hours of toll charges are now charged to the defendant. And his lawyer and I have mutual interests. I have already helped him with a much larger, possibly a precedent case and can and will help him more. We have a couple of enemies we share, really more guys we dislike, him from the present, me from the past, when I helped both pendeuchos get started. And his brother and I were pals in high school and college. Of course, I don't think for a minute that any of this will interfere with his performance to his duties to his client, but as I had suspected, his client hadn't given him the entire files. And I had offered it to his partner when I was in Wilmington.

I will not be too surprised if there is an out-of-court settlement on the terms I suggested, which are, really, quite fair. Part of my willingness to compromise is to save two more days, part because who the hell can really figure what will happen in court. It is not on the facts, which are all my way, as he acknowledges. The real problem is exactly what I told this stupid successful businessman, he was going to run his costs up with legal fees and costs, and that has, as the lawyer laughingly agree, already a fact. What people won't do to screw others. Good when it kicks back.

On more pertinent and serious things: We have arranged a quadruplicate deposit of the newly-declassified documents. Bud is getting them in collaboration with Arch, arranged by phone last week, keeping the originals under conditions where they will always be available to those who may need for reproduction, and will be making copies initially for Arch, Paul and me. It will probably be cheapest for others to get copies through Paul. The problem of the irresponsibles, nuts, paranoids and self-seekers, magnified by PH, remains and is even more clear with what I have since gotten. I had a good gut hunch, got the pages surrounding those they volunteered on Ferris (I had a standing request for all), found they had given me but about half, etc.

These bastards are so unimaginative in their duplicity that, as I told Howard while we were taking a walk today, I didn't even have to check records, compare the list of declassified with the basic list, which would have taken hours, just played a pretty sure hunch and hit the jackpot. But this really means there is much more, part of which I can reasonably anticipate, and I hate for any cheap, sensational use, which will foreclose. I'd also probably resent it and become a hermit, for this has been an enormous labor by me and no one else, and I have and had very serious, long-range reasons. But, I'll probably still due. I can't tell until I've seen everything and consulted. I probably didn't keep you fully informed because this is not an area in which you have worked, but two of the major New Orleans mysteries no longer are....One of the things I have to consider and on which I have a tentative opinion is the effect of this on other litigation. I think it is good.

I think the negative you returned has captivated Cyril. I have a letter asking me to phone him and did, but he is out of town.