Dear Phil,

Your attractive and welcome card picked the best of possible days to get here, one already broken up.

I was a laggard this morning. I returned to bed until almost 5 a.m., which, while late for me again, turned out to be precisely the correct time for a perfect schedule. It gave me to the minute exactly the time I needed to write and read a short insertion in an over-long, completed chapter I had just reread and be able to brew the special tea I serve my wife in bed at the moment the CBS TV a.m. news goes on here, 7 a.m. After breakfast I took a stiff constitutional, enough to have my legs aching for an hour after I returned. The walk was just long enough to give me time to go over the paper before a collaborator arrived. He is always late and I figured him just right, too! (That book is The Informers.)

The work on which I am engaged will be enormous when completed. Without a contract and with no prospect, I may as well be the Dr. Eliot of The Watergate and do the definitive record. Sure as hell the Senate won8t and the brow-flopper isn't, personable as he is on the tube. The chapter I just completed winds up with how he covered up the whole Nixon police-state plan, how he suppressed evidence he had and deleted the hot stuff from what he did not suppress. In fact, they have denied me copies of the supposedly public evidence. My own Senator seems a bit unhappy about his inability to get it, too. I guess the rest of my life will be devoted to another in a series of whitewashes. Anyway, it will be aout four books in one because for comprehension and credibility they have to be handled together--when there is no publisher to say I do want this and 1 don8t want that. So it is very complex, more difficult to keep in mind than my earlier work. And I'm writing a book on a breaking story. I began it in May. With all the hearings held to date and with all I've written - my wife has retyped close to 75,000 words and I have half that much awaiting her now -There is only one page on which I'll be making a change. (Braggart!)

"The pace of contemporary events" is simplified too much. You need complexity in there, and especially about all you enumerate.

I have read the Times-Pacayune coverage of the Garrison trial. I don,t know your sources. I felt from the first that he was framed, the trial convinced me of it, and the only way I figured he'd lose was by inadequate preparation or blowing it himself. I have a notion that the deciding factor is the kind of thing that insane genius can conceive and then pull off. I believe he offended and demeaned Gervais to the point where Gervais insisted on being called as a rebuttal witness. this made the government, not Garrison, "responsible" for him. He was their witness. I also believe his parting of the ways with his lawyers was a contrivance, the only way he could address the jury and confront his accusers without taking the stand. If he had taken the stand, they'd have done to him what he did to Shaw, charge him with perjury after acquittal...Don8t go for the TIME line: it was a non-New Orleans jury. One New Orleanean only on it.

The situation in the Middle ast is, I believe, quite Byzantine, much more complicated that appears on the surface or has been indicated by any commentary I've read or heard.

"Byzantine" fits the Agnew situation, too. Nixon did it to him and he pretends or believes otherwise. Crazy mediocraties only one of who is good at badness.

Hunt is fascinating. I've been making a not-impersonal study of him. If you have any impressions after watching his testimony, I'd be interested in them. His politics are a bit to the right of Courtney's, if you did not know.

I predicted Ford would be Nixon's v.p. in advance in a memo in which I also laid out the reasons. While there were many possibilities, I felt he was the one and I am satisfied my reasoning was sound. (I do this to test myself, not as ego-tripping. It makes a record that tells me how my analysis is. It is less difficult than might seem to be the case if you know the people, the forces and the needs. Going back over the analyses comforts me in the work because I hold a minority view and the reassurance on understanding helps.) One part of Ford's Oswald book should be enough to disqualify him even for Nixon. He blabbs something terrible and in this part he unbagged cats still not and never to be recaptured. He is one of the world's smaller six-footers.

I hear nothing from New Orleans any more, so I don't know how the continuing Garrison travail is going. He still faces income-tax charges and the Shaw civil suit. He should win both.

That whole business is not going to die for a while. There was much too much mishandling. The friend who came today had a clipping reporting the filing of a libel suit against Walter Sheridan, the former Bobby Kennedy ramrod NBC sent down to Axe Garrison. He got them into a large libel suit from Gene Davis (Wanda's). They actually aired Dean Andrews in one of his more extreme flights identifying Davis as the real Clay Bertrand. Now he and his publisher are being sued by a private detective, Joe Oster, over what Sheridan said of him in his anti-Hoffa book (here is where he ramrodded).

He had a short reference to me in that book, relevant to nothing. The only non-inaccuracy was my name. It has been months since I wrote him a polite letter on it. It remains unanswered.

He's gotta be one of the world's great investigators- he was McGovern's on The Watergate!

Gotta get to other things.

                                        Best,