

4/3/74

Dear George,

If you want a measure of how much your letter of the 2d excites me, I have eight pages from Jimmy Ray and I haven't even read them to be certain I will be able to mail this when I leave for town to pick my wife up this afternoon.

I am all for all or any of your suggestions, however it works out of whatever you or the UMW people suggest or prefer. And please do whatever you can to get it started as soon as you can.

I do have two suggestions to make and if there is any reluctance or opposition, they are only suggestions.

Recently there has developed institutional interest in my work, all of it, not just on assassinations. If the funding can be arranged through some foundation, it will begin officially immediately. Informally it has already begun with a small local college that is being reborn, so to speak. Formerly it was a women's college. Now there are a few men. And both institutions are interested in oral histories.

Some of these young women have already begun specialized studies. They are bright and all I have met to date are fine human beings. (I expect two this afternoon.)

So, if the UMW people are interested and have no reluctance to have a few college women present, I would welcome that. I think giving students, particularly women, an insight into this new breed, would be good for both the union and the students. And I think letting the students in on a largely unrecorded part of the seamy side of recent history while they have an opportunity to be with and to evaluate the kind of men who have evolved could be valuable to them.

Your handwritten note asks, "Or should I wait for your book?" I plan none of this. Perhaps one of the students might be interested in a thesis that could make a book? If so, would it not serve all interests?

This leads me to one of the two restrictions I would like to make. The first is an obvious one, given the nature of the material: not that what can reflect unfairly on others be prohibited from any use, which on other subjects I was asked, but that there be real care and consideration before there is any use of this kind. The other is that I hold for my lifetime the right to the literary rights. This is not the same as saying I reserve all literary rights. It is, rather, that I would want some fair share were there to be commercial use. This is not only normal, but we have been broke and in debt for a decade. And I mean not use but only where they may be commercial use. I do believe there can be movie material in this.

So, if the others are willing, I look forward to what you suggest, but I would like it to be taped, not with the formality of what I understand oral histories to be, but more like a bull session, with wide participation. Not only is it likely that others will have substantial contributions and probably fascinating personal recollections, but I know from experience of the past that when I have real dialogue and a receptive audience it draws me out. Not like a ham on camera but it triggers recall, reminds me of incidents that had not come to mind, things like that.

My own taping equipment is, of the operative, limited to a Sony TC 40.

If it is agreeable to the UMW people and any others (you? your kids?) I would then suggest that for busy men an evening might be better. For these students, any time up to about the middle of the first week of May, when they have to begin preparing for finals. If this is agreeable, I have in mind a small group, to be selected by the dean who would, I am confident, be interested herself.

Unfortunately, I'm too broke to use the phone. As of now I have an afternoon meeting in Washington 4/15. I still get up before the sun and could be at UMW headquarters the beginning of their day if these people would like to meet with me briefly and discuss what interests them, how to go about it, etc. It is possible my schedule will change but as of yesterday, it is this. It can be important to me because it is a Hollywood interest in an aspect of my work. Yesterday a mailgram concludes they are ready to reach an agreement.

