

Helms coming misdemeanor indictment/Bob Woodward's story in WxPost 1/12/76 EW 1/12/76

Although during the night I'd heard radio treatment of this story it was not until after lunch (less for me!) that I could call Bob. He was busy, I left word and he called me after I picked Lil up.

I suggested that with the passing of well over a year and the lack of direct quotation of the relevant parts of WWIV he might want to use this as a follow up. But I began by saying it was too late for the second-day story. He was in a hurry and so was I so I read him only portions of what Dulles was asked and said about perjury.

Even his story conjectures there may yet be a perjury charge against Helms on only two of his well-publicized false swearings. (I did not remind Bob of more.) So I suggested that perjury as the dedication of CIA patriotism in its ultimate began before Helms was boss and read what Dulles said when the Powers question was raised and skipped to Dulles' saying he might not tell the Secretary of Defense.

Here, unless he was dissembling. Bob indicated he saw the point and thanked me.

I suggested the transcript itself would not take that long to read, the Post has the book, so why didn't he decide for himself. And that much of the transcript had not been used at all.

I had planned to go further and tell him more but when as usual he began with a clear resistance, although he concluded with more than merely polite thanks I did not go further - on the conjectured Helms attorney and his CIA past representation. Considering Bob's resistance with his past attitudes and supposedly not to be repeated comments with Edward Bennett Williams also counsel to the Post it seemed best not to go further.

Superficially this is a good story. Someone told him of the pending minor indictment. But good reporting would have begun with an earlier period, when the account of the Nunez burglary was first known - long ago. The obvious question then is today's issue: was it approved. Today's answer, easily guessed then, is that Helms did approve it.

Interesting that the case is under Civil Rights rather than Criminal. It is both. But I wonder if there is federal jurisdiction under this or any other charge it would be a felony rather than a misdemeanor.