

Dear Js,

3/31/74

Instead of a 5 a.m. attack on accumulated filing, I write for two purposes. One is to seek titling advice and the other is to report glimmering hope. They come together.

Perhaps I have not kept you fully informed, but for some time I have been working on a project for a working archive for all my files at a college. The major problem has been financing, by which I mean including keeping us going in some modest way to continue the work but hopefully in association with students who can profit from it while advancing it.

I began a more concerted effort about October or November of last year. As of Thursday I was to hear this coming week when I will be invited to Miami to meet with Mr. and Mrs. Louis Wolfson, who have expressed an interest. While there may be some prejudice in college circles against him because he served time, I see some real advantages, coming from his experiences, that government did go after him hard and he thinks unjustly and then treated him viciously. So, he and his wife, who he met because of her interest in the injustices, have a special interest in this special area that most ignore.

And it is because of this interest, which I do not want to sublimate, that I seek help on a name for the whole thing. Not to cater to the Wolfsons, for this permeates my work, beginning with Whitewash and through Frame-UP and in all my FOI suits. I have been thinking in terms of Government in Crisis and can see meaning for myself but I do not think that to most people this will suggest either assassinations or injustice.

So, if you can suggest some catchy, descriptive name, I'd appreciate it. It can be important, as all public relations matters can be.

There has been a special problem with the local college, still almost all woman. It was until a year or so ago all woman. Now there are a few men only. The problem is flu. It has kept those I've wanted to meet busy doubling up, teaching the courses of the sick profs. The head of the history dept. is one of the sick and the dean of women has been doing her work, too, and these are the two I did not want to by-pass getting to the president, who is an old friend of Bud and who I could simply call and see. The dean of women attended the seminar as long as she could and seems to have been favorably impressed, the prof told me. I asked him to have her contact me when she had a moment because developments required me to know not that they commit themselves but that they are interested. The reason is not only because I am meeting Wolfson but because I have a hard offer from Wisconsin. And I can't let opportunity pass.

Yesterday a.m. I phoned the dean. She welcomed the call and told me she had planned to call me as soon as she finished her domestic chores. She came midmorning. We were having a good chat but had hardly gotten started when a carload of students came. I had told them they would be welcome at any time when I was not deep in writing and that at the moment I was not. While it interfered with communication with the dean, in a way it may have helped because it gave her a chance to see more of how I work with them and treat them. I think that in the long run this may be a benefit. She had to leave to keep other appointments but as she left she told me she would try to be in touch with the president before Monday. She seems genuinely excited by the whole package. I am impressed with more than her intelligence. She seems to have the required political perceptions of the detail and the overall. I have the impression that she looks with favor on more than the project, on me for what I have done and on what I have done.

Before the girls came we had a chance to discuss some of the things I can see for the students and I think she appreciates this and agrees. Once I am fixed I want to tackle financing some research fellowships. I believe that once the project is established this should be much easier than getting it established. Research projects should be an invaluable and practical adjunct to education and should add to the work and to the value of the archive. Or, all interests come together in it and serve each other.

These seem to be not poor women and some probably come from wealthy families. But I think most have to help meet the costs of their education and none have the grubstaking for spending the summers working without income.

Some impressions: First + must say I have enjoyed the contact so far and do not regret the time it has taken. None of us lasts indefinitely and if I can interests others in doing any work at all I consider it a plus.

I have enjoyed all the contact I have had with the college generation but the women have always stayed in the background. I remember lecturing them about this, long before women's lib, when I was with small groups. I remember once at LSUNO in particular, when the group was the college's liberal activists. These women there would picket and demonstrate but they would not participate in the discussions.

When I finished my opening remarks this past Tuesday, with the entire seminar there and some of their friends, I had to solicit their participation. The only man in the audience was the prof. So, politely, I let them have what for. Surprisingly, they welcomed it. And once I got them responding and participating, they did it very well. I think it is probably the only occasions on which I have gotten no single foolish question and what means more, none that was not a good question. I can't say this for the more sophisticated campuses like SF and UCLA.

What I think I am really saying is that women have been more suppressed and subdued than I had realized and that these I have met of the so-called liberated generation have been reared to accept it to the point where they need liberating from themselves, from their rearing and their self-concepts. More, I think they realize it. If I am correct in this, then I believe that they will respond positively, constructively. All indications to date are of this. Aside from what emerges in discussions, one has offered to do xeroxing for the use of the seminar and another is going to mount clippings for Lesar's use in court. On a more sophisticated level, two are going to the Archives this coming week, getting themselves introduced and accredited, and then will undertake a project for Koch, Lesar and me. And in the future I see these some of which can make books.

To date, face to face, I know about a dozen. It is gratifying that one of these plans a career in the law. I know of one more and will be meeting with her after a fortnight. I can help these as they will not be helped in law school, as even my lawyer friends would not deny, having come to this help after they were experienced lawyers. And I think we need more women lawyers. Even more, liberated and liberating women lawyers. All seem to be history or political science majors. One of the most interested is 27 and with no plans to remarry after a disastrous marriage with a Vietnam vet who was on hard stuff. She will be taking two years for her master's degree and during this time will be in contact with me. Her parents live less than 30 miles away. Her thesis will be related to the subject.

All of this is good for me in two selfish ways. I enjoy being able to help them and they are all so pleasant, several smiling almost all the time, it being their nature, that is good because there is so little for us to smile about.

I see no possibility of the women being any more of a disappointment to me than the college men with whom I've tried to work, of whom Howard only was worth the time and effort. (Lesar is separate for I did not get to know him at Madison and he is older. He has learned well and fast and performs magnificently. He is really great. Unlike the others, he is not hungup on his own error. When he has found that I was right and that my way was right when we had disagreements, as early on we did, his mind was open and now we have no disagreements. Unlike most lawyers, he has seen the need for factual basis and has taken all the help this way that he could. I regret not being able to be with him in Houston Tuesday when he confronts Foreman but I was able to arrange for him to do it and then to help him prepare himself for it. It may be sink or swim for him but I am satisfied he will do well and better than the more experienced lawyers would. We went over his approach and some specifics Thursday.) Aside from their unquestioning dedication to Garrison, which was disastrous, the men all tended toward the paranoid and the irresponsible. Where the women have been influenced by this, as by Computers and Garrison, they are freer in mind and will look for disproof and accept it. (Yesterday was an example. One had the edited version of the description of CD931. In the Garrison version reprinted in Computers, it has the government withholding files on "Oswald's access to information on the U-2." Actually, "classified" is omitted, and they could readily see that while we do not know if the information was properly classified, there could be classified info about the U-2, that it is wrong to omit this from the description, and if legitimate defense info is involved it would be withheld. Not even the Steve Burtons would go this far.)

Maybe our new wave will be women. We sure can use some womanpower. The indications to date are that they are more level-headed than the men were.

So, if I can get this thing going, over the years there should be worthwhile contributions if only from special studies and projects. I have one going now, an assessment of the modified Roger Craig. I could buy his original testimony but the paranoid amplifications are the kind of thing that is hurtful, particularly behind the back. It is a prime example of the simplification that can be shown to an important figure and turn him off forever. So, my girls, ahem, are starting off with self-criticism. I hope they will communicate this kind of thing among themselves.

If I can get this project going, I will also be looking for the addition of all other relevant files in the future. It is understood that I will be using mine as long as I have the capacity and that there are some I will be restricting until my work with them is completed, as in books or in deciding that I have carried any line of inquiry as far as I can quietly.

I showed a few examples of what I have to withhold yesterday. On the one hand, it was impressive because of content and on the other because in passing them around I was displaying trust in total strangers. (But the way to earn trust is to trust. And it encourages responsibility.)

Most of my contact has been with this very warm rather motherly 21-year-old from a Pennsylvania Dutch background. Next with the two mothers in their 30s, then with the 27-year-old divorcee. After this with the youngest and the toughest-minded of them all, a sophomore from an apparently ultra-conservative family, the one who wants to be a lawyer. Her father is a surgeon. She turned him on by a simple, direct approach: she gave him the autopsy report to read. That did it. I think she has the notion he may fork up the money to print Post Mortem. Some time ago she said she wanted him and me to meet when he is here. Yesterday she told me it will be this coming weekend.

This gives me a tight situation with the Wolfson meeting of uncertain date and probably having to be at his convenience and a 4/15 meeting with Freed (ugh) on the screen rights to my Ray/ing work.

The most youthful looking of them all seemed to me to be a precocious freshman, hardly more than a child. She is working on the King assassination. When I asked the prof about her he said merely that she is a senior and very bright. The dean yesterday added that she is also class president. No, entire student body. Imagine electing one who looks like a child to be student-body leader. She must have much.

She plans for the law. As a senior she will be leaving. But if there are the facilities, she can spend the summer as Lesar's research assistant. It should give her good experience.

It is this kind of thing I'd like to be able to arrange for the future. It will be mutually helpful. These bright young women can help and in helping will be learning what colleges do not teach.

Best,