

McKnight

3/1/74

Dear Jerry,

If either of the deans would like to make the kind of evaluation of my work that I think can be more informative than reading my books, I have a proposal.

The books stack. They have withstood the testing of time, the libels of partisans and assaults of all kinds. But the average person is not in a position to judge what is or is not factually correct and whether meaning attributed is valid because so little was disclosed officially and except for leaks, all that was officially disclosed came out in two enormous doses too large to comprehend.

With what is known by the rubric Watergate it is different. Reporting has been extensive, so extensive even the indifferent have not been able to escape it. And I am writing a book so large it is really a series of books, each a separate study of elements of society.

As I believe I told you, my work on this is so large retrieval has become a problem. I am reading my contemporaneous notes in quest of what I remember but can't locate. In this reading I have reached 9/16/72, the morning after the original indictments. I had available then only the news story of that morning's paper. The indictment was handed down the previous afternoon. Based on that I wrote an analysis of the indictment and what it means that at 5 a.m. of the day the new indictments are due I predict will find validation in them and in the coming hearings on the confirmation of Earl Silbert as U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia.

However, the validation exists independently. This is merely shorthand for a fast check, a means by which the probabilities of what ⁺ have in mind can be tested.

It may seem immodest, but in going over these notes previously unread and now a year and a half old I get a keen satisfaction for there is virtually no error, there is insight and understanding of what was not even remotely indicated, there is exceedingly accurate forecast, there is substantiated (by time) commentary on politics, politicians, the press and the way society and political institutions in particular work and fail to function as they are supposed to and much, much more.

What impels this note is the spot analysis of the indictment before its text was available and despite the omissions of the reporting. Later I got the indictment and I have written a chapter on it, again without going back and reading these notes not to be influenced by a desire to authenticate my spot work. That chapter is months old, ~~was~~ written and retyped last summer, one of the early chapters. I am, in fact, now reading these notes for the first time. I didn't even read them when I wrote them. I am making only typographical corrections and dating them. It will seem like bragging, but it is a relatively minor point that prompted my laying the reading aside for this proposal. From the reporting alone I accurately forecast an unindicted co-conspirator. I wrote his name in the margin this morning for the future. It is Alfred Baldwin, to the moment of the indictment still never mentioned publicly. There are more significant comments in this long note-analysis and all have since been proven to be correct. The Baldwin one is so minor I cite it precisely because it is minor, as an example of the fullness, definitiveness and clarity of my contemporaneous analysis. With all the time that has passed and all the opportunities all the media have had, the exposure of this spot analysis have still not been reported and the full text of the indictment is now in my files for comparison and evaluation.

What may be surprising is the extent of these notes. To the morning of the indictment, which was very early in the overall Watergate story, they are book length. They include carbons of letters to reporters with fact still not reported. (There is one helluva commentary on the press here because I had extensive contact with those who won the Pulitzer and what they would not touch is clear and documented. And major sensations still not reported, not even today!)

Because much is still unreported and represents a literary asset I would have to ask that confidentiality be preserved. In one case some of my sources may be indicated and that also should be confidential. But aside from this and ordinary care I have no stipulations should either of both of the deans or you care to read these notes during the coming break. Or, of course, any other time.

I have no objection to any use, as in teaching, ~~xx~~ of some of my methods. It will be apparent from the parts of these notes I have read that beginning with Who's Who I worked out a great sensation, one of those still not reported. In what was in the papers one reporter only started with Who's Who and he was aborted by an incredible stupidity, assuming that phone listings for 1972 were identical with those of 1965. He was a Miami reporter. These records show how I tried without success to get the Washington Post's Pulitzer boys, both of whom I know, to do this, that they would not, and what emerged when I finally did it. That is not in full in the notes I have read but I know what follows. And if it seems Byzantine, it is all very real.

I have added red markings to these notes as I read them. Just reading the marked portions will, I think, provide an evaluation.

It may seem immodest, and boasting is not my intent, but I think that in the future these notes alone will be an exceptional case study in political science teaching, the kind of thing never included in texts and generally beyond the ken of professionals in the teaching field. It is the nuts and bolts of political analysis, not the theory. And it shows what can be done and what in all of our society nobody did while it was so very easy to do and so necessary to society.

I see a number of future uses possible from these notes, among them guidance in doctoral thesis on such things as how the press worked, how the political system worked and in each case failed to, things like these. Of course, going along with them I have files now three drawers in extent and including some still-secret documents.

Should anyone want to read them I will have read past 9/16/72 by the time they may be wanted and will turn over all I have read. I can deliver others as I finish with them. It is my current practise to read them before dawn and then get to other work.

I do believe reading them provides a means of measuring my work, particularly what is most difficult, its dependability, for I have been dealing with the incredible and that is not easy to credit or comprehend, particularly when powerful forces want no comprehension or understanding.

And this, of course, gets to the integrity of any form of society.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg