

Dear Jim,

House committee-calls from

10/13/76

Glad you phoned a few minutes ago so I could encapsulate the call tonight and ask you to think about suggestions.

~~Sam~~ Rick called me to see if I could go there. I assured him I can and will and that it was Sprague's idea that he come here. I think that would have been better but I did offer to take the bus. It is now set for Wednesday and I can get a ride that day.

It will be in Downing's office, so I supposed they do not have space yet. Sprague and I are set for two hours. Then I'm to meet with other lawyers.

As I told you I'm much encouraged by the totality with which my most basic recommendation was taken. Sprague's prosecutorial experience was largely is not mostly in homicides. Rick told me that under him there is going to be a sort of deputy general counsel and under him two more homicide experts, one for FFK, one for King. Great, despite the problems this can mean with the fees. Normally one would have expected an experienced defense lawyer with some criminal experience.

The present plan is for them to break about half and half on legal staff, to total about three dozen. I suggested King did not need nearly as many. Rick agrees but there may be a black caucus problem. They did swing it.

They plan for a staff of about 170, quite large.

Sprague has a completely free hand. Hiring and firing too. I don't think the Devines of the Congress will be happy about that or abide by it. They see red through opaque black glasses. But can also be handled if necessary.

I'll know Wednesday how much of the rest they are accepting. If they don't go for it without putting Morrow, Lane, Mann etc on I expect Wednesday may be my last visit there. I'll make this clear at the end, with reasons.

Rick said it is too bad that you are still Ray's counsel. I said not so, that you could still testify and in my belief should because there are important areas that should at least be in the record and part of the Members' education. I said that with these subjects you ~~may~~ have no conflict of interest. I mentioned how the courts and the law work and don't work. He liked it. I did not specify but I had both King and FOIA in mind. You remember and think of anything else. Or make notes when you can. The FOIA story can be a very significant part of their early work. I'll make notes on the bus tomorrow on what I want to talk to him about.

Gathering a staff of 170 means trouble. It will begin with informants on it, people ready to do dirtyworks and end with the Mike-type assassination. When and how they'll get them and what they'll do worries me. Their knowledge will escape internal communication. Starvation amidst plenty legends. I've been through this with a much, much smaller staff. When everyone works very hard there is too much too many do not know, even then.

I made brief mention of the Fauntroy mess. Rick is aware. He says it got the resolution passed. I said only because others copped out, the truth would have done it better. Why didn't they do that.

I'm not letting my encouragement over the very firm taking of the course I outlined deceive me or soften my own determinations. I see much trouble ahead. If Sprague is a real one and if I can establish a basis of truth and faith perhaps this can be saved, at least from being a disaster.

I told Rick I'd have no objection of the whole thing being taped and do recommend it because it will be controversial, because there will be too much to remember, and because I'll welcome confrontation with those who speak trouble for Sprague and the Committee. He seemed to like the idea. I won't do it. I tried to get him to understand that there will be much non-fact dumped on them when they have no basis for discrimination. I would like them to be able to hold me to account for what I say and represent as fact. On this he says he told Sprague that he'd never question what I say is fact and would accept opinion. Best,