

Dear Joe,

2/12/90

We are delighted that you've gotten stationery and with your two letters just received. Although you use half-sheet size, with your characteristic efficiency you do use all of each and you do say remarkably much in rather few words.

Because I'll be interrupted by lunch soon and because responding to it is easier, first your letter of the 7th.

You misread my output as indicating that I am energetic. "relatively, perhaps, considering the strain, stress and limitations imposed by my recent surgery. But compared with the recent past I'm the opposite of energetic. Fact is that before the mail came this morning I wrote the John Hopkins cardiologist who dictated my limitations asking if in some degree they can be changed to permit me some upper-body exercise, which I think I miss much and could perhaps give me a little more energy. I'm having no trouble at all from this surgery but I'm having much more trouble with the old problems in the lower extremities and I've asked him about my seeing another specialist there sooner than April, which is what he'd told me. The way things are here, I can't get to see the local cardiologist until early next month so he can't give me any relief from the restrictions, with which I do conform.

The complications following my prostate surgery in January, 1986, have limited me more than I was limited before then. ^{earlier} The ~~earlier~~ limitations are the consequences of two emergencies after I was given a teflon artery in the left thigh toward the end of 1980. This also relates to what I'll be saying in response to your generous and beautiful letter of the 9th.

You equate politics and politicians with nature about whose violence we can do nothing. Your pessimism and your belief that nothing changes, which come ~~to~~ from your own experiences, are both justified and in some degree wrong. You cite the French that is well known, the more things change the more they remain the same.

We are in an ^{era} ~~era~~ in which the politicians are a great disgrace, to us as a people and to self-government. No freedom and peace and to many other good and worthwhile things. Taking the Nixon and Reagan administrations and now Bush's you could not be more right. But this was not true of FDR's or of JFK's, despite the flaws and failures of both. Especially JFK's last year, which few people appreciate or understand.

Today perhaps we do not think of them as politicians ~~but~~ ^{but} those we call the founding fathers were politicians and they were a credit to that so-long dishonest but necessary calling. Before World War II, when some of the most unconscionable bastards were in the Congress, there also were some very fine people who were good legislators that I, and I knew, some rather well. *They were good and honorable people, '82.*

But I think you cannot say that beginning with our revolution, things were the same as they had been. My own belief is that the men who established a democratic system here included some of the wisest political thinkers, some of the world's best politicians. That most of the politicians since then have been poor copies, many corrupt and corrupters of the system that was established does, of course, argue your way. I'm saying only that there are and there have been exceptions and they have been important to the country and the world. This country and its attitudes and policies changed radically with FDR, for example, and to illustrate the greatness of the change, compare the plight of older people when he took office and the present, from just his Social Security. Or the lot of older people before and after Medicare. Or the poorest of all ages before social services came to be accepted and to be the practice - because politicians saw to it. *Madrigals west us.*

I think you err in comparing me with Don Quixote and in saying that I tilt at windmills. "And in the process get churned up." This has not happened and it won't. I have and I will and with this my work will survive all the rotten, dirty things that nazi-like officials have done to me and to my reputation. and as one direct result I cite the changes that came about as a result of my persisting in one of my earlier FOIA lawsuits.

The Congress changed the act over it and that opened the files of the spookeries and out flowed, the exposure of ~~the~~ ^{of} the terrible things they did that we once believed were done only by the KGB and the Gestapo. You are right in that since changes were compelled by those exposures politicians have sought to return to the evils supposedly ended, but that they were at least as stated policy ended is of considerable significance to many people and to the country. People's lives are better as a result, freer and with less cause for fear. If it is far from commonplace this did come to pass because I was Andy Jackson's one determined man. *Not a windmill! dear friend!*

It remains to be seen how much good bringing to light all that was so wrong when JFK and Dr. King were assassinated will ultimately do but informing the people who do vote is less than a complete futility and I doubt very much that faced with similar crimes and tragedies in the future errant officialdom will dare behave again as they then did.

Mankind moves forward and backward but I think that we have advanced much, very much, for all that is so very wrong today and can't really be excused - thanks to the politicians for whom you have so little use.

Very few are born politicians. They become politicians. For all that is wrong in Israel, is it not better, at least for those living there, that there is Israel? Whatever its future may be?

Having had lunch I discontinued this but will discuss it further with you if you'd like. Including whether or not the people in the USSR are better off, now and/or in the future, because of Gorbachev. Or from the lengthy Washington Post article I mailed you, because of, of all people, ~~KGB~~ andropov, who'd headed the KGB and its excesses. That people there kill each other with freedom, the azeris and the armenians, is perhaps support for your argument, but how long has it been since the last real pogrom? Pamyat is on your side of the argument but that they have been restrained, by politicians, is on the other side.

Your offer, along with Sam's to help, that I write what amounts to an autobiography is generous and flattering. There was once a time when I not only considered a variant of that but made extensive notes for it. I think they are often turgid and rambling, in part because with some awkwardness, before the days of the smaller cassette recorders, I dictated those notes on a fairly large machine while driving back from New York on those many, many trips - made trying to get my first book published. *That was not a good time, ally with,*

I never lacked confidence in the book, had not a single question about its accuracy, never doubted the importance of opening up that subject matter, and I wasn't frustrated. I made more than 100 efforts here and abroad and I think this makes it clear that I was not frustrated. In the end I was able to publish it even though I was broke. On which, while there are notes and some letters, the notes are probably not really complete. *not a windmill!*

I did plan a book on the non-publishing history of the book that opened up the subject of "the crime of the century" and was, of all things, runner-up in the mystery book competition for 1966. It had the title, "Dick Daring In the Hell-Box; or How I Got Rich In Six Months." a hell-box, in my reporting days, was a wooden box into which used printing type was thrown to be melted down and used again. That took high heat, thus the name. The "rich" part ^{was} two parts. I began with a contract for the book and while the publisher was drooling into the till from an advance hardback sale of 39,000 copies before it was written, and without any advertising, from salesmen merely mentioning it, he broke the contract. He did not even return the manuscript and I had to reconstruct it from incomplete and often illegible carbon copies. (For which I'd used paper that was monographed on one side!) So, a friend got his cousin, a professional editor of considerable experience, to read it. I also asked her to edit it when she spoke to me after reading it. She declined to do that, saying that while it needed editing, no two publishers would agree on that so let the publisher decide on the editing, and she predicted that I'd be a rich man in six months from that book. *It remains, pretty much a rough draft. And it is to a success*

I don't recall whether I told you, but my dear friend Sidney Kaufman introduced the book and me to Pocket Books in early 1965. It was one of the first places I went to. A senior editor, Eugene Prokapis (phon) read it, although ill, overnight, and flipped for it. He told me that with my background and their public-relations capabilities the book would be "a new Green Felt Jungle" (that was the best-selling book of 1964, he said, and they'd published it) and I'd be one of the best-known men in the country. But the owner, Boris Shindin, with ample cause, feared the DJ, and rejected the book.

I was too busy to get around to writing it and I have a full file drawer of data relating to it. In retrospect I also wonder if I could have been as light in word and touch as the title required. *I think not!*

Other things always seemed more important to me. I had another book researched that I also didn't get around to writing, "Tiger To Ride," or "the Untold Story Of the Cuba Missile Crisis." As originally planned, it was to be a book on the Kennedy administration. With the passing of time some of my original analyses became dated and I decided to limit it to that crisis and what related to it. Not Vietnam, etc. I did make an accurate analysis of the Tonkin Gulf incident contemporaneously. (And one of two others that did not take off as it did.) What I had for that book is now coming out in bits and pieces from the conferences here and in the USSR of the leading participants on both sides and a few scholars. These completely confirm my analysis.

I suppose that one of the reasons I never got around to writing Dick During is that I don't have the kind of ego an autobiography requires.

I am sure also that a couple of other books could have more significance. I won't go into what I would have in them or seek to do with them but perhaps you can gather enough from the titles, "The King Conspiracies" and "Agent Oswald." And I have been thinking about these two.

But any writing now entails a certain amount of a perhaps rather unusual risk for me. Others might not see it as I do or even think this way. My work, to now, is of really incredible accuracy. It has stood time's testing, both the books, which is what I was talking about, and the multitudinous affidavits I've filed in the FOIA cases, *which are a record.*

I believe that were I to write with less accuracy now it would undermine the printed work. I've seen how the spooks do this kind of thing and they do it effectively, inside the government and with leaks to the media. I don't want to undermine the basic literature in those two great subversions, the basis of history, really in them and in the court cases. (Dave Wrone, a history professor in Wisconsin, said of my affidavits and litigation that I was writing the history as it happened, something like that.)

Nonetheless, I was thinking about ^{how} I might do this. Particularly when I have no agent and no publisher. But for me to publish means that Mil has to be the typesetter, in effect. Time was she was the very greatest. She wore out two machines with our earlier work and we then got another one that was a dream it was so good, for three years. Then it started going bad and finally, wonderful as Hermes stuff had been in the past, they took it off the market. She now has the third new machine since then, an electronic job, and she can't do as well as with the old-style typewriters. Her typing, when she is up to it, just is not as accurate as it used to be. Then there is the question of what she'd be up to. (I am at a loss to explain her reduced accuracy and she hasn't, except to say that the machines are a problem.)

I also have doubts about the kind of copy I'm now able to turn out. Except for parts of Post Mortem, all the books I published myself are rough drafts and few if any publishers would publish them unedited. Although Dell did when it reprinted the first two, after turning them down four times before I published them.

Since the end of last year I've been thinking about this in a different way, getting as much as I can down, whether or not in book form. I suppose that what tended to get me

thinking this way is the reminiscences I've been writing when something suggests itself.

I'm going to try to do some of this on tape, I think, as soon as my health indications are clearer. I'll return to this about the health. I have a dictating machine I've used only twice, the last time in 1979, and a transcribing unit for Lil. But when I did try to use it a few months ago I think it showed signs of the accumulation of dust over the years of no use. I intend to find a local place that can clean it. It runs forward OK but ~~reverses~~ reverses slowly and reluctantly.

From my recollections of how what I dictated while driving came out back in 1965 I don't think I dictate good copy. Not publishable, anyway. But maybe I can at least make a record that may in some way find some use.

I am rather anxious about the deterioration in my legs. I have to wear the anti-embolism stockings and they now seem always to be out of adjustment. When they are, they are counterproductive. I got new complications after the prostate operation and they seem to be increasing since then. There is and has been a question of my being able to hold onto them. What the family doctor suggested has had no benefit after five days and I've asked the local cardiologist's office to give me any cancellation so I can see him before early next month. I've also written the Hopkins cardiologist to see if I should go there to see an expert who saw me about last October.

And what I feel now, I'm not supposed to sit for more than about 20 minutes at a time without getting up and walking around a bit. I get involved, as with this, and forget, and then I'm tired and unsteady. The blood gets down but doesn't get back from the legs. So I'm knocking off for a while.

I should tell you why I got a dictating machine when I could not afford one and had never needed or wanted one. A judge did something that can't be imagined. Sam, please put this to your son. She asked me to act as the DJ's consultant in my lawsuit against it! I was to and did file a consultancy report, about 250 typed pages. I was to have been paid and not only didn't get a penny, I was stuck with the cost of the two machines.

Then John Ray, James Earl's brother, asked me to appear with him and his lawyer, who was also mine, when he was before the House Select Committee on assassinations. That turned into a real hassle, live, coast-to-coast TV, and the committee had to agree to let us file a commentary on its alleged evidence. It was supposed to provide that but stonewalled to delay and never did provide some. About two days before their last hearing I began dictating this commentary. Lil was typing it as I dictated it. She finished and we made copies late the night before that last day and I got it there on time. I had not read it then, have not read it since, and it is 49 typed pages. It is a powerful indictment of that committee.

Your flattery refers to my writing about my life's experiences. Some time ago, in writing Sam, I referred to my trying to live within ^{the} traditions of our people. I think I have. (More Yavneh that "ethar but a bit of both?) I believe, in Frost's words, that we have promises to keep, those of us who are able, in the miles we go before we sleep. In this sense I see what I ^{had} not as not as usual as you do.

Pretty much of what you mention does exist for others to use as they may see fit. Many, many recollections are not recorded but the details of government misbehavior ^{is} ~~is~~ ^{are}. It is to perfect this, to the degree now possible, that I persist in trying to get the records they withhold and ⁱⁿ annotating the whole thing.

Have you stopped to think that ⁱⁿ a collaboration of the three of us ^{would} ~~would~~ total more years than the United States has?

Seriously, there is another consideration: I can't concentrate as well. From time to time when I get lost in what I'm doing I have it for a short period of time, as long as I'm not aware of the discomforts and what they bring to mind. But I will think of this, seriously, in part because it might be quite enjoyable, and in part because use without doubt,

particularly when a light touch is needed, Sam would be the very best!

It is a fine and a generous thought and offer and I can't exaggerate how much we appreciate it. Funny thing is that for other writing I've been looking for help. At our ages and states of health I can't justify spending any of our not plentiful resources on an assistant. If I'd had one to do the searching in my files, in the basement, and to refile what is used, I'd have the rough drafts of several books on paper. Whatever their literary quality, they'd have been accurate and thoroughly documented. My problem would have been what to eliminate from the mass of documentation on which I could draw. Please believe me, the book on the King assassination could be close to unique in our history. and overwhelming in this. But I could not bring myself to do it off the top of the head. I could do it only fully and irrefutably documented, and I have that documentation but can't get to it for all practical purposes. and it would, to a degree, be a first-person book because I was Ray's investigator. I did the investigating for the habeas corpus, which got him the evidentiary hearing he'd been denied. (To see if he could get what he has never had, a trial!) I then did the investigating for that hearing. and now I have the FBI's documents to prove my investigation and its conclusion. In this alone, a dream book for a writer or an investigator.

Another partly-written book, Agent Oswald, was started more than 20 years ago. Since then I've gotten the documentary proof that is hidden and is not in the official investigation; he never had an assignment in the Marines that was not connected with the CIA and he had "crypto" and "top secret" clearances. and is accused of killing the President while this was unknown to the official investigators who could and should have discovered the proof as easily as I did. (like so much, what I dashed off in those days - it retyped and I've never read. I am sure that what I wrote is rough but can be used. far from complete, but this need not be a long book.)

There are people of means who are interested in the political assassinations but they have never been helpful and they have piddled away vast (to me) sums of money on what anyone with common sense should have known was irrelevant. For the most part they have egos that make them yearn for the accomplishments their approaches cannot yield and they never learn and keep wasting large amounts of money in the same kinds of futilities.

I could have done much, much more, with, I think, some significance, at least in perfecting the history and I do think more than this.

but first we'll have to see what my health situation is and what I'll be able to expect to be able to do.

What a wonderful thought and offer! We love and respect you ^{even} more for it and can't thank you enough for thinking of it and for making the offer! I will think about it but I think it would be the most difficult thing I've tried to write if only because I do not have that kind of ego.

Thanks so very much!

~~It~~ 1/ What could have been in past. My point here again is that this would not have been windmill-tilting and that it could have been but there was no unselfish, caring Joe to make it possible.

2/13 P.S. I'm taking the dictating machine into town for repair. American efficiency being what it has become, it has to be sent out of town - just to get cleaned. What not too long ago I'd not have been afraid to try myself.