

31 August 1974

Dear Harold:

Herewith the dub of Nixon's au revoir (his choice of words) to the White House staff, preceded by his resignation speech the night before. Both should be heard at a single sitting, for their contrast and the example they provide of how he can ~~w~~witch from one role to another in only a few hours. In resigning he is playing the misunderstood ~~xxx~~ statesman who has only the interest of the country at heart, and is so intent on looking out for us all that he neglects to mention he is being forced out of office by his own actions. The next morning he's the calamitously chummy politician next door, his speech careless and slurred as though he were speaking from some village loafer's bench. Mixed up in all this is an abnormal preoccupation with death and sentimentality as only Nixon can serve it up. In both speeches his left eyelid drooped as it always does when he's under great strain, but he appeared in good shape generally for the ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxwithxxxxxxxxxxfaceand~~ ~~saggingfeatures~~ resignation speech, in startling contrast to the puffy face and sagging jowls he presented the next morning.

You're familiar with this role-playing trick of his, of course. Over and above his largely unspoken pose of being the victim of persecution -- still pervasive enough to suggest paranoia -- there is his involuntary plunge into different roles, in which he automatically assumes all the mental furniture necessary to back up each role, to the exclusion of everything else which would offer contradiction. To what extent this could be schizoid is something the psychiatrists will have to figure out, as he also shows signs of another role-playing syndrome where the roles are even more violently different among themselves and where the victim actually becomes in his own mind the ~~xxxxx~~ person (often his own invention) whose role he adopts to escape the pressures of his normal identity. This is something which carries a French name, hysteric grandee or something like that, and usually occurs with people who have had extremely traumatic experiences as children. Nixon had a WASP father and failed to make the football team, but I ~~x~~can't see that these misfortunes could have resulted in anything quite as unyielding and obscure as this particular variety of hysteria. He's been this way all along, of course.

We agree with you that his sequestration at San Clemente is largely because of legal problems, but also think it may be due to a) he has yet to figure out just what his next role will be precisely, and b) his instinct to keep everyone guessing as long as possible. We already had begun saving stuff on this by the time you wrote of it (see enclosed clips).

Also we had guessed what you put so well, that his and Haldeman's cases still are not separated, but that both are trying to spread the word that they really are separated. See STM's memo of 17aug74 for the fact that they had conferred by phone sometime between 12 and 28 July during Nixon's last ~~xx~~ pre-resignation stay at San Clemente, and for the fact that Dan Rather mentioned the separation of cases, which probably was deliberately leaked and Dan bit on it.

You make an excellent case for the political need for gradual, controlled revelations about UFOs, both for Nixon and Ford. I had assumed that it would be politically acceptable, otherwise it would not have been decided upon, but had not thought it through far enough to relate it to an actual need for a distraction of that magnitude and dramatic nature. I think you are quite right: there is great probability of such a need because the process of deterioration now going on cannot be arrested without changing the exploitive nature of the whole system, and we wouldn't want that, would we?

It seems likely to us here that Nixon, who quietly nursed and hoarded the China issue for 25 years (by making damned sure nobody else could use it) is just the fella to decide to use the UFO potential. And as you say, Ford's problems bid fair to equal or exceed Nixon's as far as ~~political~~ politico-economic difficulties are concerned.

Accordingly, I have dashed off a note to Lorenzen, pointing out that if he hasn't thought of it himself already, this decision is being made for reasons which have nothing to do with the only reason it should be done -- that the people have a right to know what's going on -- and that it can be turned off or aborted at any stage; furthermore, that there probably is division of opinion at the top as to its wisdom, so it can be expected to be contradictory and confusing and full of possible treachery. Govvamin't is govvamin't: its own survival comes first.

Very pleased indeed to learn from your memo on the success Lesar and you had in Memphis or wherever it was. It certainly sounds as though the judge paid serious attention to your memo, and let's hope the feds don't catch on to what is building up in time to head it off with a coup of some kind.

If we were living near you, I would be pleased -- we both would -- to offer editorial help on WWIV. However, at this distance it seems almost totally impractical to attempt anything that could turn out to be of any value. Anyone who tried it would simply have to be near enough for /constant consultation with you as to exactly what you mean to say, and I cannot see how anything resembling such coordination could be achieved at this distance, quite apart from the problem of the mails. Lesar and Howard both know what you're working with, so they would be my first suggestions. But any good newsman whom you could trust ought to be able to give you good workmanlike suggestions for clarity and organization. The operative words there, of course, concern trust. I understand your problem.

Thanks, we have both texts and dubs of GL's last two speeches and of Ford's first, so we won't need copies from you. Thanks for offering.

Best from us both,



jdw