

Dick Daring 5/15/66

Sometime between 11:15 p.m. last night and 1:55 a.m. this morning I lost Friday, May 13, 1966. Not that Friday the thirteenth was a bad day; it wasn't. But at just before quarter after eleven the "loyal" Marines were battling the suspectedly "disloyal" Army in Danang, South Vietnam. At a little before two I was in the Brahms double concerto. It was better when I awakened, but in

the dream that was not at all surrealist but a review of the intense activity

Thursday afternoon of the week, I went right from the/agreement of District News Co. to distribute

WHITEWASH to my stupidity in not checking the guarantee on the car and driving

25 miles for the required 30,000 mile service only to find it wasn't due until

32,000 miles. This is the way Saturday morning began.

Actually, Friday the thirteenth was a better day than Saturday the fourteenth.

Friday things came to a head at the Post. Saturday began with a goof ~~was~~ and was

spent writing letters and mailing out copies of the book.

Friday was a much better day, for it presaged and precipitated the decision the Post had been avoiding for almost 10 months. One way or another I wanted it decided, for as I had told Dan Kurzman the previous week, it was I who had put my neck on the block, and it wasn't comfortable in that position for so long a time.

Kurzman came into the picture and the dream of the ~~night before last~~.

Thursday night dream belatedly but fortunately. He probably never imagined he was my dream boy.

Al 'friendly'd response to my letter asking if he was throwing away the riches and honor he himself predicted could be lavished upon his paper and its stockholders without seeking to learn if they were available was the promise that this time Larry Stern would read the book, and fast. Only nobody saw to it that Stern could. After a painful week or so he asked me if I'd mind if he delegated the responsibility to <sup>another</sup> a reporter.

"Not if it gets done", I had told him.

This was Kurzman. He got off to a slow start, like on a muddy track.

Not until I told him publication was imminent did he really get to reading, and then he went fast. ~~TUESDAY~~ Monday the ninth he had gotten half-way or more when I delivered the bound copies. Wednesday he had but two chapters to go, and he was excited. Thursday he had finished it and pronounced it the best investigating job he had ever seen. Friday morning he told Stern it was "fascinating". He is convinced.

But that must have come sooner, for on Tuesday he was arguing with me that the Post should have the whole thing on an exclusive basis, insisting

that was his understanding. Larry Stern told him all the Post was offered was syndication. When I phoned him Wednesday he at length explained how I hurt myself by not having a detailed press release. In vain did I argue from six and a half block away, in Steve's office, that responsibility dictated each reporter reach his own conclusions.

"Senators have learned that when they make long speeches they get no press. When they make short speeches, or have good press releases on their long one, reporters can do something with it." He convinced me. I took it up with Steve, He was convinced, too. Back I went to the Post, forgetting the undelivered press copies, and sat down at a succession of typewriters, each until its rightful owner returned, and punched out an unread series of points in the book that the government had to answer and from the book could not. Already too late for the scheduled work, I gave it to Dan and left.

Thursday was delivery day, and a good one. By a little after lunch time, when I was in the office of \_\_\_\_\_ Bermont at Brentanos, 14 bookstores had taken 602 copies, which is pretty good, even on consignment, and this didn't include the Brentano chain or any of the Department stores.

Bermont is one of the many very decent and well-disposed people I met ~~ixrthxexedntexef~~ through the book. In the middle of our conversation he

picked up his phone and asked his secretary to get him an assortment of people unknown to me but all of whom were connected with the media and his friends. Fortunately, they were all not available, for his last call was to the owner of the District News Com.

He got the manager.

"This is a fine and important book," he told \_\_\_\_\_ Williams. "You ought to have it. It will go."

In response to Williams invitation I left for the other side of town and his office immediately. He had in the interim apparently talked at least to his book manager, George Kesler, for it was clear from the beginning District would distribute. By the time I left Kesler's office and he was an hour late leaving for supper, he was considering whether they could help in other cities. The 175 books remaining in the trunk they took right then.

"These are going up in the airport bookstore", he told me, holding aloft the sheet of exhibits reprinted from the appendix for the press.

Only after all this was taken care of, with poor Kesler's hunger pangs running through my imagination, did I phone Kurzman from his office. Dan had finished the book and was clearly for it. Only then did Kesler get to his supper.

During the history of the book, in order to be able to fall asleep at all, we had fallen into the habit of trying to be in bed before 11 p.m. Then we'd tune in the half-hour news broadcast on WTOP, usually falling asleep to it once the mind was enticed off the day's developments and the future's problems by the gore and disaster of the second half of the twentieth century, the era of man's greatest enlightenment and progress.

Thursday night was no exception. I fell asleep to an account of an airplane disaster in Pennsylvania. But Kurzman's reaction was much on my mind. It took over my dreams, and by the time I was conscious of the beautiful melodiousness of the Mendelson violin concerto, which must have been in the neighborhood of three a.m., my subconscious had done the next day's thinking for me and I was wide awake.

Friday morning I called Larry Stern at his home. He agreed he and Dan and I could get together first thing, before they all got too busy. That time never happens in the Post newsroom. Dan was on the phone when I got there, a half hour before his day's work was scheduled to begin. He was still on it 20 minutes later when Stern arrived. Stern and I agreed that as soon as he eased off we'd get him out for a cup of coffee, to where there was no phone within reach. It was during this voyage to the second floor that Kurzman

revealed his fascination.

Probably his own experiences with his own and excellent book on the Dominican crisis, "The Revolt of the Damned", also apparently a subject the book publishers avoided because it was not in accord with national policy, that conditioned Dan in my favor to begin with.

Over coffee we agreed on an approach. The Post would confront a spokesman for the Commission with my evidence. We went over some of the points and agreed to keep it simple. We'd stick to one thing that clearly destroyed the entire Report, the story of the non-fatal bullet.

"Can you take a half-hour and get it all on paper", Larry asked me after he and Dan and I had returned to Al Friendly's empty office, where the operator could not locate Dan and we'd had some privacy. Dan and I had shown him the evidence and he was sold. He went in and spoke to Bradlee, Dan went off to keep and 11 o'clock appointment and I waited.

On a single sheet of paper I outlined the impossibility of this basis of the Commission's entire case, each with citations, throwing in the burning and corruption of the early autopsy papers and the FBI report, both of which related, for good measure. As I removed the sheet from Carroll Kilpatrick's typewriter Dan returned, just in time to end my bewilderment that some of the

country's finest writers wrote on some of its lousiest machines.

He agreed with it and I gave it to Stern, who glanced at it in  
apparent approval.

"We'll show it to Wille ns, whose a nice guy, and see what he say,"

Larry told me.

I waited around until he got a half-free moment again, for there were  
other things we'd discussed that I wanted clear.

"This book is only the beginning", I had assured them all. On my first  
onterview with Bradlee I had assured him I'd take him to other things besides  
the FBI report as soon as we had an understanding. In confidence, I told him  
what and where. That morning I'd done the same thing with Dan and Larry, to  
Larry's obvious apprehension, which was a reflection of his integrity, for  
had we no deal, only his honor would keep him from doing without me what I  
had promised to do for them.

That's what my dream of the previous night was: show them what could  
follow my book, the revelations yet to be made. Two I had specifically in mind  
were these: if the spectrographic analysis of the bullet and the fragments  
wee were not in the archives, and the pictures and X-rays of the President

also not here, the Post would demand them. There could hardly be the claim of security. The refusal to make these documents public would be clear affirmation of the unmistakable analysis of the evidence. We didn't get that far in our discussion, for events and conflicts with normal newspaper work prevented it.

All I could do as I left was to tell Stern that for \$37.00 I could get a list of what was available, only I didn't have the \$37.00 to spare, Upon either their assurance they would syndicate, which would give me the assurance of some money to live on, or their promise to repay the \$37.00, I'd get the list that day and work on it over the weekend. I was ~~tempted~~ tempted to tell him they'd already gotten \$55.00 worth of books from me, free, but didn't. He couldn't authorize it, but call him back at three. At three he hadn't had time to talk to Bradlee, and we agreed I'd call him tomorrow, about it.

So many things were happening at the same time, so many things had to be done at the same time, and there was no one else to do any of it, that I lost many of the loose ends. During our phone conversation when I was keeping George Kesler from his evening meal, Dan had said they had other people reading the book ( I was during the Saturday dream to wonder how many, with three manuscripts and five books there) they needed a few more copies. These I gave him and Larry



Friday morning, while wondering if Geoffrey Wolf, the book-review editor, had ever gotten his. Leaving Larry, I dropped down to Wolf's office. He was out. Returning a half-hour later, it developed he had no copy of the book but had just been told of it by Bradlee. He'll do a review if the Post doesn't syndicate, for they never review the books they syndicate. He was pleasant and clearly understood my apprehension over the course events, undirected, could take, and by the expensions on his handsome face and nods of his head, I believe he shares them. He was amused at my exchange with friendly. I told him the history, Trevor-Roper's intro, etc.