

5/29/74

Dear Dick,

After you phoned yesterday my copies of the official printing of the Nixon transcripts came. They are facsimile reproductions of the typescripts, on government-size paper, 8x10 1/2, with a full page running 9" from the numbering at the top to the bottom of the last typed line. On a spot check, the widest of the typing is 6 1/2".

Pica type size.

This is to give you an idea for reduction and reproduction.

We talked about a 6x9 page originally. I think the slight reduction, if 1/2" is allowed on both sides, which may seem tight but is not in the "underground" format, will not make it too hard to read. (Most lines run much shorter and there is considerable space between the initial representing the speaker and the words allegedly spoken.) It would be 6 1/2 reduced to 5. The double-space makes for easier reading if wasted paper in a book.

Of course, the book can be on larger stock if that is not uneconomic.

Howard is a very solid and dependable young man. He also is exceedingly sharp, has a better knowledge of the material than any editor you would be able to find, so I am confident he will do a good job of first eliminating and then combining the quotes so the subjects will be put together as well as can be done with conversation.

But until we both go over them, there isn't much more we can decide, at least not finally.

I did complete a chapter on the other Watergate book yesterday. I would like you to understand the problem that I face, with the book rather than others, which are different.

This is a breaking story. Remember I told you that the Bantam/Hollenhoff book would come to nothing? Clark had neither the knowledge nor the energy nor the disposition to do the amount of work and thinking necessary. His name meant something only if there was a cover on which to print it, which required contents.

The problem with contents in a book that is not a rehash is to anticipate all possible developments. I find this not really difficult because I have spent 10 years at it. But it does mean extreme care in selection and writing.

In addition to this, which means time and effort but no more for me - and I'm not a bit worried about being outpaced by events - there is the sheer volume of the material. I now have an archive on Watergate alone, a full file cabinet of material (not counting the books as they come out, for I can't afford them). When one works alone, even without other troubles, it taxes the best judgement to decide what to eliminate. Because my purposes are serious (and my experience proves this is also a merchantable commodity) I can't and don't make these decisions in haste.

What I am driving at is a combination of sales slogans, not as slogans but as content descriptions. The story that wasn't told. The story that couldn't be told. It is amazing how much can be public without being known, understood or put together.

(The really hairy part is the why - who sat on what, who would not publish what. Except where it is essential for source and context I plan to reserve this for an epilogue, a first-person account which, if honest, can be an indictment of the entire media and a large part of the Congress. Thus should it be necessary it can be eliminated.) But as a record if nothing else I'll do it. All of history may turn on that failure, that abdication of responsibility, the permeating fear and cowardice.)

In effect, this means that I have to feel my way through this writing, deciding as I write what to put elsewhere, what to eliminate. I haven't read what I've written and won't if I can help it until I am finished. It is hard enough to keep all this in mind without adding that confusion. Confabulation is a problem.

The chapter I did yesterday deals with the previous connections of the central Watergate ~~characters~~ characters, centering around Nixon personally. And all apocrypha, too. With this feeding into later expose chapters. This I regard as expose, by itself.

is really an essential part of the story, unreported as it is. And a former spook, under his pal Hunt. For whom he rendered great services after arrest and is now supplying counsel. Beginning with suppression.

There is a choice of what should immediately follow. I won't be able to make it until I see what this chapter is and has.

Although all of this is CIA stuff, there will be a separate expose on it, and I'm now inclined to let it come later, to build toward it.

This is another way of saying that after the beginning, which can't avoid the transcripts and the reasons for them and such things, I'm trying to handle it like a mystery story.

At the same time I have to be aware that there will be an impeachment vote and write this so that regardless of what does or does not happen in the House and the Senate the work will not be dated whenever it appears and for long thereafter. I not only expect to do this but if the work can appear at any time close to completion and there are no new problems added to those of our lives, which take an enormous amount of time, and if I do not grow wearier, what I do believe I am writing is a book that can and should have an influence on the ultimate outcome in the Senate.

I would encourage you to believe this can mean a dangerous book.

Recently a foundation almost underwrote my work. A friend made the approach but delayed it too long. By the time it came up for consideration they had over-extended themselves on a special project. This would have resulted in all my work being a college archive and my having a small annual income. If you have any connections with any such foundations, this would be tax-exempt for them and more than welcome for me.

As a result of an article I sent to England months and months ago, dealing with my secret relationship with the late Senator Russell, who was a member of the Warren Commission, I heard from a series of London Times people on several aspects of my work. First from an old friend, the daily paper's American editor. Then from a Sunday staffer, who made a date to come here when he was in the U.S. Then he came here and stayed overnight, a full day. After he got back I heard from one of their "experts" and he, too, came. Both seemed to be impressed. It would be a pleasant surprise if something good were to come of having sold an article to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the JFK assassination and then having the publication chicken out too late to offer it for that timing elsewhere.

This is a other way of saying that the publishers of crappy books that fail are wrong if they think there is no real interest in my old work. While looking at TV news today I will be packaging six orders that came yesterday plus any that may come in today's mail. It has been this way for about eight months. And it is not easy to find me to place orders.

It would cost much to print completed except for deciding on the appendix Post Mortem. I think in the end it would at least pay for itself and it is a definitive work no commercial publisher would touch. One of the things one of the London Times men is considering is a deal that includes condensation of a commercial edition, which can survive only with the backstopping of the complete work.

Even after Watergate, he was impressed with the character of the documentation.

So, I've brought you up to date.

Best,