

10/24/70

Dear Bud,

At the risk of sounding paranoid, this story:

My mail didn't come today. I don't think that in the three years we have been here there has been a single day on which we got no mail. In this case, the New Orleans papers were three days late and a package sent first class from New York, a small instalment of the first, uncorrected proofs, was at least a day late. So, when the mail was an hour late I phoned the P.O. and learned that the mailman had no reported mechanical troubles and in my box, on our route, there was no mail.

After perhaps a dozen futile trips to the box at the end of the lane, each of about 1,000 feet, I gave up after 1 p.m. I phoned the P.O. about 2, to find out if the route man had forgotten to leave our mail and had returned with it. He had not forgotten it but there was a large bundle for me.

So, I went in and got it. At least one thing shows signs of having been opened and glued together—Jim's 10/22 letter, enclosing the draft of the Ferrie complaint. He and I had discussed it by phone. Anticipating there may have been some interest, I opened all the mail from the wrong end. In this case, the flap was glued to the letter itself. And, not evenly, as though he had been careless in sleasing a fat envelope. The reflection of light shows this.

I have not had time to read the mail, and we are expecting company momentarily, so I'm making this note for a record and so I can give it to you Monday. Within the past few days there has been something like a trigger on the bug turned on by phone. Naturally, this also could have been an accident in dialing or someone who called and they changed his mind. In this case it was less than a full, single ring. You know about the keys, which can also be innocent. But believing that all of these things can be nothing but innocent is not very easy.

The third-class mailing, bearing the same cancellation, came as rapidly as first class. Both today, both cancelled P.M. 10/22.

Your own excerpt from something sent you, same postmark, same mail—also delayed, or disappeared, whatever it is. I'll give you a brief memo on that separately.

Sincerely,