

10/16/71

Dear Js,

Last night I just fell apart, not from excess hours, for while I've been getting too-little sleep by normal standards, for more than a month I've been insisting on more than my norm. I suppose it was emotional fatigue caused by a few of the things reflected in some of what I've been sending you. Almost as soon as I ate and relaxed a bit by the Alice in Wonderland news on TV. You can't get the full savor of Ronald Regan saying that, in a more roundabout way than did LBJ with Diem, Thieu is an updated Geo. Washington because neither had opposition, that a one-candidate election is democratic as can be and besides, what is wrong with it when they have them in Russian, Tugo, and several other places (he omitted Nazi Germany and China)?

So, I got up early and cleaned up some accretion. There is the promising pink of a pretty morning now, and as soon as I've let Lil sleep a bit longer, I think I'll take a walk before breakfast, while she is screwing up the energy to face another day. I suspect she worked late last night typing the corrections I made in PM I.

So in these moments, let me make a bit of sense of something I have not spread at all in the critical community. I think it is you alone to whom I sent a copy of my letter to Cyril Wecht, which I wrote at a time I should not have and probably went into things I needn't have for reasons that are certainly obscure and may have been wrongly focused.

He and I have been in close touch. But he has done nothing. The one exception in my case is that he has answered every one of my letters. He and Sylvia have been close, but often he does not respond to her. He is busy, making much from it, so busy he can't do all the profitable things possible, his explanation to me. I finally limited what I asked of him to a very simple thing, where I wanted his judgement and that of his criminalist rather than my own, a simple but authoritative statement of the capabilities and limitations of the spectro and neutron-activation tests. In months this has not been forthcoming. All it required is xeroxing a page or two from a standard text in his library. Each time I reminded him I got a letter telling me how wonderful I am and what a blessing to the critical community, the country, to everything but the moon program, I am. This is its own kind of red flag. Meanwhile, I have known for a long time that come 10/29 he is going to apply for access to the autopsy film. He has never told me. He has been in touch with the CIA on this and Sylvia says she reminded him. None of these brains have thought it through. It is the last thing we want, not the first, and not only because it can now tell us little. It can have dramatic impact on the media, and therein lies its danger, not its benefit. What those non-thinkers have not realized is that the net effect will be to blame 100% of the suppressions on the Kennedy family, not the government. And we will be further from the truth. It will be a blessing for Hoover, who will get out from under, and the knights in shining armor will be Nixon, Mitchell et al (the local situation on Kleindienst is that he will not now be nominated to succeed Mitchell). The GSA-family contract was drafted with foresight, pinning everything on the Kennedy family. If the government produces only what I have, everyone from Earl Warren down can be and will be quoted on this. Specter, for example, Dulles, Rankin--everybody left this kind of record. The trust is quite to the contrary. I have more than an entire chapter on this in PM (last part) and frequent references to specific things throughout. Nobody asked Bobby, and he never had possession of the film or anything else--and who is to say it for him?

The whole thing got needlessly and more complicated when a fine young addition to our ranks, a man of some means who is condensing this work for popular appeal and says he may finance the private publication of the entire work, wondering about my letter to Cyril, consulted another fine young man who ~~xxx~~ also gave the question no thought and was referred to SM and then called me. Whether or not this had happened, my path was clear, for although if there is now a stink of any kind, PM becomes a hot literary property, the net result would be to further bury truth and the possibilities of solving the crime. And undoing me some of what has ensued. Thus my second purpose in seeing my Senator, Mac in the carbons I've sent you. He saw it right away, as did his adm. ass't. They, meaning the AA because

I feel his survival required Teddy to seem to remain detached from everything, will speak to Teddy's people and see if they can be led to understand or to see me about it. My new collaborator, whose name is Ned, can reach others, one of whom I'm a bit leery of, Katzenbach. But a disaster impends. It is little comfort to reason as other do when I mention this to them, SM and a young lawyer who works with Bud, that the odds are against the government seeing the possibilities. I reached that conclusions separately and first. But with nothing real to gain, why run any risk? For a headline that at best will be a distortion?

John Nichols, who is a rabid nut and an egomaniac so bad the Garrison office was sorry he was used in the Shaw trial, will undoubtedly apply. He has sued and lost, the case being on appeal now. The can't very well show him what they have refused him in court. But suppose they do? And they can get a patsy to apply, show him the stuff, and have him come out with a new "panel report" that he can say "confirms" or is consistent with the WR. These can't be as damaging as one recognized as one of us, as Cyril with his well-earned international reputation. We can do nothing about the others, and they can't hurt as much, it at all. As with the indictment of Garrison, it can backfire. That did so badly (and this has to be in confidence) that one of the staff counsel who has stoutly insisted he has no doubt at all about the Report has now said, privately, that the indictment gives him deep misgivings.

This may be too brief to make sense, but it is an effort in that direction. It is the kind of thing that, rightly or wrongly, has taken much time from me and given me deep trouble throughout our history, beginning when I abandoned WWII (the time we met) to go to Calif. and get Liebel off of Lane's and the LA critics' backs. The only copies extant as of that time were in SF or with me, and they were few, not nearly enough to launch a book. The one exception to these things being a total waste is H.O., where my own work was very productive. I never did any work on Shaw there, instead trying to do what JG eschewed. It could have been even more productive and may yet be.

Progress reports: pix not read Thursday when I was in D.C. I go there again Monday and hope the message I hoped they'd ten be ready. News being printed locally may be ready today if I got into town.

Last night I peeked at Bill's knitting as she watched the TV news. She is up above the date, working from bottom to top.

Best,