

7/17/71

Dear Js,

In the few minutes before Lil has breakfast ready (she's getting along well, hardly used the cane at all yesterday), let me comment on the Garrison statement included in the clips I got from you yesterday. I read them in between doing other things.

For him and the H.O. and the situation it was close to brilliant, consistent with his posture for all these years, in accord with local mores and folkways, and without a single comment in anything else you sent, not one adverse one.

I don't, for a minute, ~~xxx~~ think the week's delay was for the reason given. He sits behind his desk and writes them in longhand on a yellow pad, then whittles and hones (he did less, in this case, permitted himself repetitions he would not have in the past)

He did not defend so much as attack, and most of those reading it will believe him. Whether or not it happened, his explanation of the editing of tapes will be largely accepted because it is how that is done, because most of the audience will have been entirely unfamiliar with the process, and because of the illustration he used. And to a large degree, as they relate to him, the tapes are not incriminating. They have but one man saying I gave Jim money, they leave the question of purpose open, and there are many too many too few for a year's operation.

To make this all more comprehensible, let me illustrate with my own experience in St. Tammany's Parrish. I spoke my genuine belief, that the federal power should not intrude into what is the domain of the states. That is their propaganda belief, so they were all for me and helped as I had not dreamed any officials would. Everybody down there is against Washington, so the more Washington is against Jim, the more they are for him, and his big success in the last election is because they believed Washington was against him and he was fighting them, whether or not true, and the sign of federal intrusion into his "investigation" were not open.

In the course of all of this, the obvious omissions got lost, were not observed. He said no more of Gervais than that they had been in the Stry together as 19-year-olds. He had no single word of criticism for the man who had sold out, the man who had entrapped him, the man who set him up to at least make him appear like a criminal. This will be accepted there as the essence of gentlemanly southern behavior, where it is noted at all. Everybody will understand instinctively that the feds had something on Gervais, who is well known, and that he had no real choice. But it is not typical of Jim. Where the sick Boxley had also ruined him, and I had a helluva job proving it to him and had to do that indirectly, though the proof was transparent (had it not been, he would have refused to consider it), he couldn't just fire him, with nobody knowing. He issued a statement calling the poor sick Boxley the CIA's top agent sent in to wreck the Louisiana investigation. I tried to frustrate this, but there was nobody on the staff who could raise it with him, and they all agreed with me (he was then not coming into the office, was holed up with Salandria at the Fontainebleau while I worked like hell).

Pending trial, and I'll be surprised if he goes to trial, he's on top in H.O. where it counts, among the electorate.

The statement was not excessively long for him. The language is typical (as is what I have read in the affidavits).

Best,