

Dear Barry,

8/18/74

Congratulations on the good news in Joyce Illig's today's column!

I'm glad that what seems to be the first substantive books about Watergate is yours and that it seems to have some publisher steam behind it.

What a commentary on the state of information made available in a representative society and on publishing that in more than two years there has been none.

I think this means you face a good market prospect, especially in colleges.

Because when I was in Thursday I learned that you have been away for several weeks I know you will be busy so when I am in town tomorrow I'll not stop by. Maybe if I have time I'll phone.

I did not know your good news then and had another purpose, to which I'll come.

In a way both are related.

Illig says that the publisher with whom you broke is Hendon House.

I was in New York last week on a separate project. Before taking care of that business I barged in on Jason Epstein, who was kind enough to find a few minutes after the message from his secretary. I described the different Watergate book I'm writing and he said three times to let him see it when it is completed. If this is less than unlimited enthusiasm, it also is an expression of some interest.

How the surprising thing to me is that I described a tough book to him and it does not seem probable to me that HI will go for a tough one, less so after learning that you began with them. So, if it involves no violation of confidence I'd like to know, if you feel you can tell me, what the situation there is.

The draft of my newer WG book is not complete and I've not read any of it, so I'm not that close to letting him see a retyped manuscript. This one will require extensive editing in part because I have had to leave it for so many other things.

What I went to New York for, what I was in Washington for and what I will be doing something about tomorrow is the fourth of the WHITENASH series. It will be another "underground" book. But it will be quite unlike the earlier ones.

Unfortunately, the nature of my life and the materials with which I work impel rushing. There are without doubt parts of this fourth that could be improved with time invested. I've rushed. Except for the index, which my wife is now typing and which will control the extent of the appendix - which could be book-length and still relevant - the book is perhaps two hours from being camera ready. If it gets any decent attention before the debate on the amendments to the freedom of information law it may influence the votes. There was a time when I would have been confident that it would. Now I can honestly say no more than that it should. Whether or not the conferees hold fast against the Ford/DJ pressure and modify, I expect amendments to pass and to tempt Ford to veto. Those less familiar with Ford's past and record feel more optimistic than I about this. DJ and FBI can both be exposed embarrassingly if the amendments become law. So can Ford, who I do not recognize from what I have been reading in the Post. And there is Ford content in this new book. Remember, he was a Warren Commissioner. It was, in fact, completed before he became President. I'm adding only the footnoting this requires.

I believe I have an important document in this work. I mean by this in the immediate political sense and historically. However, I have lived too long and too painfully with media hangups on the subject and on me to expect anything except trouble and impossibilities with the book. Maybe a few more personal sneers.

I have three xeroxes only, two out of my possession. So I can't offer to lend you anything. After the recent ripoff of which Maureen knows I felt I had to keep the dupes elsewhere. However, if you are free this coming weekend and want to see any of this, you are welcome, with family, with bathing suits. Parts are by the standards before the JFK assassination real news. It is too early to say what I believe is possible, that there may be a Watergate angle. Best regards,