

14 February 1974

Dear Harold:

Must a brief response to a couple of the interesting enclosures in your mailing of the 12th, to go with today's crop of clippings from the NY Times. Incidentally, I really am sorry about the erratic way these are sent along, but the fault isn't entirely ours here. Both the Times and the Post come by fits and starts, which makes it tough. A day or two will go by and neither will arrive, then here will come a real bundle, two, three or four of each. One phase of the problem is that there's little use in clipping and copying the Times for you until I check its stuff against that in the Post. When the Post is running behind, things are just delayed further. Curiously, the only time either paper has come at all regularly in recent history was during the Christmas rush, when the P.O. was really trying. Once that was over, chaos again descended and still is with us. The Times for Jan. 17th, for instance, didn't arrive until after Feb. 1.

As to the Hearst case, we're sending you only the basic documentary material plus anything that looks like the wire services might have neglected or overlooked. We thought you'd be interested at least in the textual material.

The Marin distributor for Rolling Stone called up and said he had a back copy for Jan. 31 containing the article for the Hunt kids. Just read it. Excellent job despite a couple of carelessness errors. You are quite right: it certainly shows more plainly than anything else thus far just how distorted Hunt's mind has become, to say nothing of Buckley's.

Regarding the note to you, we naturally cannot tell from your reply just how you interpreted his note, but let me give you a couple of impressions we get very clearly from it. Taken with the two most recent photographs of him we've seen, both following his release, we believe this note shows a very strong feeling on his part that he's got things under control and feels relatively safe -- in other words he has a deal going and thinks he sees his way through. We think this accounts for the brevity of his note, typed on a mere memo pad, and reflects confidence that he need do no more. At the same time he is telling you that he's not going to give on Szulc, certainly not unless his attorney tells him to. The remark about Szulc having been a thorn in the anti-Communist side for many years strikes me as vapid and thrown in just to make an appearance of saying something.

I doubt if you believe him when he says he hasn't read the Szulc book or Woodward's review of it. Certainly we don't, although if you put a gun to our heads we admit the theoretical possibility. The effort to concentrate on positive things may be intended to be humorous and sarcastic or simply a fishing around for some way to finish. We admit the possibility that it represents a reflection of any conversations he may be having with a shrink, but do not think this is what it is.

The big thing, of course, is that he replied at all, and I suggest this means just as much a continuing interest in you -- without so indicating in any way and in fact with every effort to disguise it -- as it does in any information or material you may have. Again, do be careful.

You caught the Nixon turn-back from the physical examination exactly the way we did. The whole sequence sounded phony and wrong, even at this distance. The party apparently means he was celebrating some real or fancied victory. It has meant that in the past.

Best,


jdw