

1/20/74

Dear Barry,

George Lardner's story and Joe Kraft's column in today's Post leave me with a sense of disbelief for both say that sophisticated men, Kraft and the prosecutors, are taking the White House word as gospel.

"The time period for the crime is limited..." Kraft says. And the head, "Prosecutors ~~Eye~~ Eye October [4-7] Weekend In Erasure Probe" is an accurate summary of the story.

You will remember that I expressed interest in knowing what Nixon's log shows for those 18+ minutes 6/20/72. I do not assume that it was all one meeting. Nor do I assume it was to learn what the FBI had learned.

Nor do I assume purity of the records, even those kept by the Secret Service. I have had too much person^{al} experience with such "records" not to know that anything from destruction to lying has ample precedent. Specifically, I include Secret Service and White House.

With the redundant precedents I have - and you may see them in confidence - why assume that the story thus far reported is true, that there was no destruction possible prior to RoseMary's stretch?

If you knew what I know you might be willing to assume it might not be probable. *im/*

I think it might lead to a good story if someone were to suppose that maybe one of these pieces of grocery bag disappeared, that just maybe that 6/20/72 tape had been in someone's hands prior to the Rose Mary introduction to the new Uher.

This does not mean that the tape had to have been erased before she had it. Nor do her rough summaries mean that she got them from listening to it. Nor does it mean that she could have erased only that 5 minutes.

What it does mean is that everyone is taking the word/of those who have given their words despite ample reason for not doing this.

I think that erasure(s) by other than Rose Mary ought be considered and with it not only the weekend of 10/4-7/73.

Everything for ~~that weekend~~ ^{6/20/72} except Haldeman's self-serving notes has been memory holed. Nixon was even careful, if we accept that story, to use a phone not connected with his bugging system. And he left one that was to make that call to Mitchell, who is a knowing perjurer who knows the penalties.

We tend to assume that officials avoid lies and are merely evasive. I still do, despite a long history of knowing better and having redundant proof. But the fact is that even those with the better reputations in the Nixon Justice Department yield to political expediency, to the point of suborning perjury. Ruckelshaus and Richardson are not really Mistert Clean. Not from the records I have. Paul Valentine may remember one perjury by a lawyer under Ruckelshaus in one of my FOI cases. He was there and he remembered it afterward. Richardson violated the law and his own regulations to deny me what had already been made public in The Watergate. So, with this kind of record of the better types, why attribute any integrity to those who enjoy inferior reputations?

What I was denied, in case you have it, by both Cox and Richardson, is those pages of the Hunt grand-jury testimony used in the Ellsberg trial and the addressbooks used in the Washington trial. I believe I know things about Hunt and Cubans that others do not know. And both these items are public -court evidence, already public and in part already reproduced in facsimile. Except that these people are hungup on me, I can't figure why they deny these things, particularly with my established willingness to go to court, if necessary pro se. More so when the last time they withheld court evidence from me I got a summary judgement (CA 718-70, from Judge Curran, where Paul/was witness to the perjury).

A more open-minded approach to this tape business might yield something, I think.