

1/24/71

Dear both,

Sometimes when I want to make a memo I do it in the form of a letter to one who has the capacity for understanding the problem or the facts, on the chance that this understanding can check on my judgements or accuracy. In the case of this letter, I suppose it is also in part a kind of apology for burdening the two of you needlessly with my worries and to explain what may seem like an unnecessarily curmudgeonly attitude toward people, as with the severity of my criticisms of Paul.

Several things have combined recently to make an almost spontaneous realization of something I had never really thought out pop into mind this morning. Silences and how I've been spending my time, mostly. As I lay abed thinking about it and appraising what is relevant, gradually I came to believe it to be fact. It may necessitate a change in my approach and probably should reduce or eliminate certain of the things I've been doing.

About two hours after going to bed I awakened and started to get out of bed to commence work again. I told myself "no" and was able to sleep again for a couple more hours. I'm now in a break in the work and this remains on my mind.

I was thinking about the failure to do a few relatively simple things I've asked of one of the finest young men I've ever met, one of whom, as with several, I feel as a father with a son of whom he can be proud. I know he has been busy, but that is not new. I think he has felt the pressures, emotionally, to the point where he has sought help. I know he is in analysis, voluntarily, and has his word for it that he decided to do this to get a better understanding of himself and the better to cope with one or more personal problems. I asked him a month ago if the effects of this work were in any way involved, and he has not responded. He introduced me to someone with connections and a disposition to use them and this someone, after a month, has done none of the things he had volunteered to do, hasn't even sent me the money for what he bought when he was here. I do not very often have such feelings, and I am so open and trusting with others that some of our small band chide me for it. Only too often I learn that I did wrong, trusted those I should not have. I rarely concern myself with whether or not someone is an "agent", but for some reason on which I can't focus, I have found myself with this wonder about this personable young man. It is he who promised to give me the money for the large number of Archives documents I've ordered and hasn't sent it or any word.

Speaking of agents, I digress to report a rather strange thing, recent contact from a total stranger who first discloses conversation with a Secret Service agent and content that is reasonable and informative, then a connection with an FBI agent of the past who had close contact with one of those deeply involved in the case, with what I have always believed probable, but with detail that can make sense of much, and then adds the disclosure of knowledge of recent disclosures of intelligence operations few in so remote a place (from here and some of the stories). I don't think he is, but I have wondered about this one, two. If either is, he is one of the most sophisticated of them.

When I awakened for the second time and lay abed, telling myself I ought be getting more sleep, even if I do not feel the need, and I was thinking about the young man of whom I am so fond (his name is Gary), it suddenly come to me that daily, as each day I age more and the amount I will yet be able to do is by that much diminished, I also become more alone, for the number of people today doing really significant work has fallen to almost none. Bright Paul has recently told me his work is seriously reducing the time he can spend on this. His has done nothing but collect, in any even, and for some months he has shared almost nothing of what he has gotten with me. All of his recent efforts have been at best counterproductive.

There is a Dallas group of conservatives, one of whom is wealthy and is buying everything in the Archives (without sending me so much as a single page he thought might be of interest), one of whom is far to the extreme of the right and regards me as an enemy, and one is very

but produces naught but infrequent kind words and praises, the same as nothing. I asked two easy things of this person in September and neither is done. One is the giving of a single sheet of an Archive file in her possession and the other the lending of a good copy of the Nix film, both very simple things.

Another digression: one of the young people recently turned on by my older writing has remarkable photographic facilities available and has done incredible, magnificent work for me, I now have a better Zapruder than is in the Archives, and the technical things the FBI should have done and didn't now are done. But I don't want to go into this, except to say that it is continuing, with special versions of the film being produced (very quietly). One with the equipment zoomed on the President is done. One with it zoomed on Jackie at the crucial frames is done. One ditto with Connally is either done or almost done. Each is with each frame duplicated five times, which makes slow-motion that is really slow-motion a means of new analysis.

The Fensterwald committee has wasted an enormous amount of effort and money on the paranoid, the insignificant and the insane. There is one very decent and very bright young man working as a volunteer who has the intelligence to do and is doing very good things, but until recently most of his time was wasted. He has helped mightily with one of the suits I've filed and is doing all the legal work that is being done on the Ray case, so he is already enormously overloaded, and all his burdens have deadlines. Yet when the engineer fired for spurious security reasons who works with him refused to do it, misplacing faith in his own naive appraisal of the Archives personnel with the long factual contrary record ignored, this young lawyer made a hasty inventory of what had been declassified where we didn't know the page numbers involved. That engineer has worked long and hard, and if there is a single constructive thing accomplished by it, it was held secret from me. I think his work has been wasted. The one thing he had gotten from the Archives of which Bud gloated to me I had in one of my unprinted books more than two years ago. And it is the one significant thing of which I've ever been told! What he fed into a computer program will produce little more than garbage. Need I tell you what was fed into it when I tell you that WHITEWASH wasn't? And Flammonde and Hopkin were? And Garrison? Turner? All my unprinted work could have been produced for much less than Bud has squandered, and with the time he's wasted, he could have handled several law suits that, with what he didn't put into the one he took to court, proper preparation, could have yielded significant results.

Had Paul not told me his time is seriously curtailed, I'd still have had little hope of anything from him, bright as he is, and much as he has worked, after seeing his melonry and his persistence with it.

Sylvia is latched to the past by her job and her sex. She is brilliant (and no less bull-headed). Everything she has done recently has been meaningless, appearing in the least-heard-of of the most minor journals, like the Texas Observer, or again, like the fruitless anti-Garrisonism and support of the Thornley/Lifton operation and of Lifton, who is at best dangerously ill and is wildly irresponsible and diligently dishonest with it.

There is a really fine fellow who is both a professor of classics and a gun buff, a real good amateur ballistics expert and highly intelligent. He is doing good but dated work in this field. He is now working on a very persuasive study of the meaning of the pattern of dispersion of lead dust particles in the President's head, as learned from one of Clark's panel. It may ultimately have more significance than I now attribute to it because I think my own medical work reduces, if not eliminates, its value as new knowledge. If I am wrong, it is very important work. But the time he can spend on this is severely limited by his family obligations and his professional responsibilities.

One of the finest and brightest young people I have ever met, a 17-year-old college freshman, wrote a book while a high-school senior, save for a small part he added during the summer vacation after his first semester in college, and with this preoccupation maintained so high a scholastic average that he got a full scholarship and in college

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earned a 3.5 average. He began considering me a nit-picker and pretty much on "the other side" but though gentle hints from the classics prof and access to my unprinted work and my files got a correct understanding and has done much good work. Most, however, duplicates what I'd already done, frequently in his own way, but to the available knowledge he has added relatively little. He did find in the panel report what I did miss, and one of these things may have real significance. He is unaware that partly because it can be done, partly because he regards me as a second father, he is subconsciously duplicating me. His latest is a study of the foreign-policy considerations that may have been involved, which is my TIGER TO RIDE and if not completely, has been sufficiently researched for five years. He has turned on a prof with this. He may well add detail, but that is not as needed as work in areas in which I haven't.

So, suddenly I ask myself, who is, really, doing what is, really, significant work today? Who has, in the recent past? The answer is not at all comforting, less so when I consider that as my 58th year is almost here I feel like an old 58 whereas at 55 I outlasted all the younger ones. The only one who ever could come close to keeping up with me in time alone, without the emotional drain of what I was doing, was Hal, and he did it for but brief but exhausting bursts.

Here I am, this aging, weary man who has grown unsteady in his step, a financial bankrupt, who suddenly comes to feel that if he doesn't do what now can be done, it now will not be done. If at some time in the future it may be done, that will do no good for the living or for the future. Reporting the past does not sweeten or strengthen the future.

I am now overwhelmed by this, if I am ashamed of not having taken the time a couple of years ago, after the exhausting futility of trying to keep Garrison straight, to think it through and guide myself accordingly. But it is no easier for me than for others to change my ways. I still just can't not answer when someone concerned writes me, and I still feel I must make what effort can be made to frustrate wrong. But, with so enormous an amount of my recent time spent in preventing this kind of error, I think I now have to ask myself if getting constructive work done might not be more important, meaning the writing and the suits (and here also I'll have to assign priorities), and to hell with the mistakes of others, even if they further reduce the diminished credibility. What it really boils down to is whose credibility? If anyone plans any serious writing other than me, I am not aware of it. So, I think my own credibility can be maintained only by my own work. It can be diminished by the insanity of what others do, with their best intentions. I can get less of an audience therefrom, but I suppose I ought realize that it may be more important to build a single straight and narrow road that to frustrate the laying paving of so many to hell, to where there are already sufficient paved roads.

One of the other things on my mind abed early this a.m. is Hal's silence. I have trouble understanding why he hasn't written since before he went abroad, not even to tell me how to reach him. This is uncharacteristic, and I always find out-of-character behavior troubling, especially from those I like.

Of course, it is necessary that these fine and bright young people pursue their own careers. But as each devotes himself more to what he must do, the load I must undertake to try and carry becomes a bit heavier. I am less capable of doing what I once did and I am even less capable of doing more. This means I must try and be more discriminating in how I spend each hour. It is not something that swells my ego. Quite the contrary. But I have been at this too long for it now to be depressing. I think I've overcome all the depressing influences and events. I fear more that it may add to the weariness. And, while I'm in a position to file a number of new suits, each one of which has the potential for accomplishing what I seek, I think that I'd best complete some writing first. I also face the considerable job of digesting what has been declassified and discerning why it was first classified and why it is now released. With three books that I have sufficiently researched and feel must be completed, whether or not publishable, and the possible need for time to promote FRAME-UP, scheduled to appear in March, and with the considerable time I still have to spend on the Ray case, still knowing it better than the lawyers and having to do much of their thinking and documenting, I do have decisions that are not easy. Anyway, perhaps this thing that I had not really understood myself may make what I may do and may not do easier for others to understand, if I have doped it out correctly. Best to you both,

H/O