

Dear Jim,

10/23/73

It being a beautiful day and there being the need to use the good weather while it lasts, I spent more than two hours outside, sandwiching late lunch, and did not keep up with the news. There seems to be something up and a disclosure of the method. The thing that blocked further comprehension of the news was when I came in in time for the 4 p.m. CBS radio news and heard that Nixon is giving Sirica the tapes.

There were to have been press conferences today by Superkraut (appropriate in view of his latest) and Ruckelshaus. When there was no airing of R's at the scheduled 2 p.m. our time is when I went outside. Now, cancelling these could mean only that Richardson's press conference, the text of which I hope the Post carries, was a soft Nixon approach, his defense of Nixon. He evaded, parried and was questioned too easily. Some right questions not asked, some asked the wrong way, so the import would be lost on most people, etc. The cancellations, in my view, were designed not to compete with the play his is certain to get electronically especially and in the printed press, too. Both still regard him as a white-hatter.

What nobody is saying is a combination:

Nixon is creating each and every one of the crises. Each one was easily avoidable, from his own arguments justifying them to begin with. Example: he's giving up the tapes. He could have done this voluntarily to begin with and have avoided all that has happened since. Answer: he wanted what has happened since because it has taken everyone off the real subject.

Until Sirica acts, how this will go, assuming the tapes are pristine, is not certain. Sirica is neither principled nor bright. The hope I have is that he is angry. That there is not some kind of deal is also not certain.

It is obvious that if Stennis could see/hear, the members of the Wrvin committee could and any judge more so, safely in terms of any danger overcome by Stennis.

Do you recall Stennis' advice to Nixon, to tough it out? I don't remember how I filed it. I may have it in a reaction file that is pretty fat. I am sure he gave Nixon this advice, enough in itself to account for the selection.

One thing of two parts now seems more important to me. I may have both, I know where I have the more recent, the Post's story on the decision by the committee not to go to the Senate for authorization to spy. What I'd like to know is if the GOPs on the committee, including staff, were decisive. If they had asked for a resolution the day they were turned down by GL they'd have gotten it. No fillibuster, none daring.

Then other I heard but did not read, Baker's initial statements over the weekend, on the "summary" deal, supporting Nixon's interpretation. If this doesn't tell wobble-brow, nothing can. Realizing too late, Baker fell silent, so far as I can tell. I think it is his first clearly careless move. He can still go either way, but he is keeping the WH door open.

Caught part of a local talk TV show about 1:30, a panel including Dash, who was talking his head off, perhaps on purpose. I asked Bud's partner to ask for a tape because parts may be of use in McCord's defense. Anyway, Dash spoke of their "staellite" system of watching their major witnesses. Collateral ways of getting the info. What was particularly interesting is that he disclosed that they have leaks from the WH. He says he is sure the WH knows it. Apparently not who.

He insists that Butterfield is clean, that he was caught by accident. I'm still with the Je theory.

Be interesting to see if his giving up the tapes, after getting rid of Cox, takes the heat off of that act, important to him. I suspect the reaction and the strong talk about impeachment made the difference. NPR's quotes on call-in are fantastic, running up to 100 to 1 for impeachment. Today's Post has short piece in radio-TV page.

The little I've heard of the news from the war fortifies my belief in my analysis. It may well be more sinister than I saw. Clearly, GL and SuperK both knew what did happen would happen. If the wealthy US Jews do not see this clearly and react strongly, the consequences may be severe for Israel....It must be fascinating to be able to keep up with details, as I can't, esp. because I must spend all possible time writing. It has just finished retyping a part of 100pp. Best,