

AUG 10 1973

Dear Jim,

8/9/73

Slept late enough so there is not enough time to do any work before the paper should be here. Wanted to make up yesterday's paper, but decided to make a note I had no time for yesterday morning, one Agnew's afternoon press conference shook some. He was impressive in it, more to me than in his speeches, which I always regarded as artificial at best.

Yesterday morning I get think back to the time when I first heard that the records of his Democratic successor were investigated. That was pretty long ago for there to have been no leak since. Then I got to thinking how Nixon fights and of the certainty in my mind that he is really the fuehrer of all the horrible things, not just a may-informed bystander and then of how he has always fought. He always makes himself the victim. This is what led me to understand in advance the tack he would take on this before he did.

There is nobody he loves, not even Spiro. Maybe he even has someone else in mind, not Spiro and now perhaps not Long John. Anyway, why not rig it so that poor old innocent Spiro was falsely blamed to make it like there was this great big conspiracy against Nixon? It would not be easy to do with anything WGing now. But Spiro? He's a natural and the best of possibilities. Once Spiro is proven innocent, GL looks better and it does look like some kind of conspiracy.

Much as I regard Agnew as a bad person, this notion was seriously undermined by his press conference, even if there could be a little confirmation in it. He has been pouring out the lies so long that he looked like he meant it isn't persuasive. But he did look like it. There was something else I can't put my fingers or mind on that made him seem like he was telling the truth to me.

That there have been rumors on "the cocktail circuit for six months" and no leak is very hard for me to believe.

His representation of Nixon is odd. Here is Nixon, fighting for his life in WG and when there is the possible ruin and the enormous scandal, if not new blow, of a criminal case against Agnew and what does GL do? Not see him. Nope, for this tiviality Agnew has to sit and wait for Haig, who in his time tells GL. The picture of Nixon is like in the painting of a nightmare done in an insane assylum. And in six months he hasn't seen Nixon to discuss this with him?

That the major leak was to the Knight newspapers makes me wonder. The Baltimore Sun's men are not that slouchy, and this is a Baltimore story. There is no Knight paper there. On the other hand, my opinion of Beall is low. He and his brother are hacks, and Beall was Nixon's appointee, on Spiro's recommendation. The father was an amiable, basically reactionary hack, but he could do decent things none of which the sons have committed. I remember once when Lil was working for Marc and the father was a Congressman. Beall Sr. called Marc personally and Lil answered the phone. It coincided with the vote on a contempt citation against William Patterson, a black, left-wing leader who had done something Dies or Nixon didn't like. "Why aren't you on the floor voting?" Lil asked him. She got the old man to go over and vote against the citation, on principle, not politics. But my dealings with the Baltimore US Atty's office tells me Beall is no independent man, not a decent one of decent concerns, either. So, a Nixonian rigging in the Chotiner manner is not an impossibility.

Whatever the truth and whatever outs, we'll be spared the spaniel and the cloth coat. On the other hand, my faith that Agnew could be guilty is unshaken. He is an utterly unprincipled man for whom Lil and I once voted without looking at him, our eyes being full of the ~~incoherent~~ incoherent, rotten choice who we did know. Agnew was then a "liberal". I see nothing in his past to permit the style of living that became his when he became v.p. The kind of law practise that would let him run a PTA, be active in politics, local, that is, which does take time, would not, ordinarily, yield fat fees. He salaries thereafter were modest. And just keeping up with the Sinatras, if only sartorially, is fantastically expensive. I can conceive him having rigged a childing cover for himself in this kind of typical local crookedness. If he didn't have his hot littles on it he could believe himself innocent. There is only one Nixon, but looking back on his performances, I can believe that anything is possible before the tube with these kinds of subhumans. It is a fascinating situation. I haven't had time to read any of the stories. I'm keeping them separate in my WG file, where there was an Agnew one since the first story on the graft.

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