

JAN 7 1972

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1/4/72 If I do not present this as the revolution come, nor as the ultimate in journalistic honesty (nor as a promo for having a TV), it is a fact that the first third of tonight's NBC-TV evening newscast, formerly the Huntley-Brinkley Report, was a slashing attack on Nixon. It was all proper, all in accord with the accepted norms in form, but that did not change its impact. They even called him a liar, using that word this time. There was a prisoner's wife, representing the organization of war-prisoners wives. The woman reporter said, like in asking, "You're calling him a liar" and the wife agreed, following which she chattered and versed. Brinkley defended Ellsberg and bracketed him with LBJ. B said the Pentagon Papers belong to the American people, who paid for them in diverse ways but could not have them. So, Ellsberg gave them to the people, for which he has been indicted, will be tried, and faces this 100-years plus if convicted. Meanwhile, LBJ has a book, The Vantage Point, which sells for \$15.00. It also uses the Pentagon Papers. For giving them free to the people, Ellsberg faces jail for the rest of his life. But LBJ, who is selling them for \$15.00, is relaxing on the Pedernales. Shades of all those RCA defense contracts! But I have been surprised. Brinkley wound up with a 565 AD quote, that a spider's web is like the law, rather, the other way around, the law is like the spider's web. It ensnares the weak but presents no problem to the strong. My 18-year-old guest, a rather non-demonstrative youth, said simply at the end, as I have never heard him say, even in jest, "Right on!". CBS did have a bit of gentle ridicule about Nixon's continuing advice to football coaches, this time to the coach of the Miami team, which used a play in winning a runoff. Nixon wants them to use that play again (is there a one-time-only play?). Cronkite noted that when the Washington

Redskins used a play Nixon asked be used, they lost their runoff. ... I doubt the printed word will give the flavor of the Muskie announcement, or the bad photography, or the bad lighting, or the very bad and misplaced emphasis. He does it later on CBS, but we got it 3 times, the same clip, identically, on the NBC local station (theoretically) local news, on that net, then on CBS (rarely view ABC). Real Ugh, but good words. Like an out-of-practice preacher trying with some difficulty to recall his own creaking devices. Best, HW

1/4/71 Last night NBC and CBS TV News both came as close as I expect either will to calling Nixon a liar. With NBC it was fairly explicit and with CBS it was implicit but clear. It was on the prisoner issue and the alleged need to keep US forces there because of the prisoners. Apparently someone in the White House caught the boobo or got wind of the coming coverage, because a "clarification" was issued yesterday. Both nets used McGovern to respond. I found myself wondering if NBC's was the more vigorous presentation because the interview was a CBS exclusive. However, I also suspect that the News got a bigger audience than the original, one-net appearance. H JAN 7 1972