

26 January 1972

Dear Harold:

To clean up some odds and ends:

Enclosed is the States-Item rewrite, presumably of Grahm's story, on Dr. Lattimer, with the focus on the DA.

Also a story from the Freep which picks up the letter from Routs to Evelle Younger, and with an interesting affidavit from a Pasadena criminalist.

Before I forget it, some time back you asked us to inquire about the possible superiority of a particular brand of tape for voice recording. Now we cannot find the question among your various letters and notes, and have forgotten the brand name. In any case it was one I'm sure our dealer does not carry, as it was one I'd never heard of. If you still want this pursued, ~~xxx~~ give us the brand name again. I think I know what the answer will be -- that there is no material difference in tape sensitivity -- it all depends on your recorder -- how free of internal and external static and other extraneous signals it is -- and on conditions such as the microphone involved. After all, Tape is merely an emulsion or thin film of iron oxide on the tape on which sound is recorded by modulating the magnetic influence on it directly from the sound signal, and as long as the layer of iron particles is there that's about all that you can do from the tape end.

In your letter dated 1/8/72 you ask if we cannot reconsider about the younger member of a certain family, actually a cousin of some kind. The answer has to be no, unfortunately, and I'm sure you will understand the commitment involved, since you do the same sort of thing yourself.

Thanks for sending the Excelsior series. We hope to get the section where Chou talks about our mutual interest translated and if and when you will get a copy.

Also I have a promise of a copy of the Palo Alto Times with the story about Russo and Rand, and hope to send that along soon.

Under separate cover we're returning the tape you sent (and I trust we may not be struck dead for erasing Dear Martha's deathless words) with two things on it. First, there's about five minutes of Eason and what he said about Lattimer. Then we dubbed about an hour and a quarter of a tape that came originally from BBAI last October, an interview with an FBI informer named Sannes who tells just about all there is to tell. Probably little if any will be new to you, but it is an interesting concentration of the story in the guy's own words. For listening to the next time you try to chop off your thumb. (By the way, I find we've forgotten to commiserate on that unfortunate experience, and assume that you're healing nicely ^{now} that you've got hooked on capital letters again. And also by the way, I have come across the usual assortment of systems of typing (newsmen are the weirdest) but you've established a precedent of some kind as the first who works the shift key with his thumb).

Anyway, this tape slopped over on to a second cassette (Lafayette) which is in the same package. This was because I read "120-minutes" on the cassette BOX and proceeded on that basis without checking the time on the cassette itself. The Sannes thing takes up another 10 minutes or so on the second cassette. Let me warn you that this Lafayette tape is okay for dubbing where you have control of the situation, but better not try to use it for recording anything live. It has a nasty habit of jamming halfway through.

relativity

In your 1/17/72 you discuss the possible ~~relativity~~ of an election year to the Lattimer phenom, among other things. Before I go into that, let me say that I am much puzzled about Graham and his apparent reasonableness. I suppose it's entirely plausible, but not knowing the guy I have difficulty accepting him in good faith. I must say that we've read his 9Jan72 story in the Sunday Times closely and he appears to be trying to protect himself in many cases. I have to assume that he was told what to do, ~~prkkyx~~ pretty much how to do it, and followed orders. Still, I feel uneasy when I think of the dismal record the Times has made for itself in the past eight-plus years, and am inclined to feel that regardless of his personal inclinations the Times is not going to be swayed for a long time to come. I hope I'm wrong.

Now, to get back to the election year thing, I still suspect this to be the likeliest overall reason, always allowing for the possibility that some spot development such as your book could have brought it on a bit sooner. This isn't a good figure of speech, but the situation could be likened to a log jam of possible protests and demands for new investigations, and in this log jam there is a key log, Ted.

As long as he is quiet no other candidate is likely to use the issue in a campaign simply because everyone will say: If the Kennedy's aren't excited, you should be be? Any other candidate therefore simply can't use the issue without risking accusations of playing politics with the grief of a long-suffering family, etc., etc., dragging the ~~zk~~ national honor through the mire and being in general the tawdriest kind of politician possible. So as long as Ted is silent, all is well, and this circumstance in fact may be the only life insurance he has and may not last too long. For as things stand now, if he dies of anything except old age there is going to be talk, but this situation could change by 1976 when the temptation to assert himself may become irresistible, or at least certain parties may think it will. My personal opinion is that if he is drafted at Miami and says nothing he will be killed, but that if he is drafted and begins to talk and hits it hard, using the resources available, they would not dare kill him because of the two preceding assassinations. But this is his last chance. Because if he runs in 1976, even without talking, he'll never live to take office.

Somehow in your ~~XXXXXX~~ 1/20/72, written after our Glorious Leader's State of the Nation address, I gain the impression that you somehow failed to swoon with delight. You are right, of course, about his being the great imitator. The only thing we would add is that he imitates compulsively, because he knows nothing else to do, being totally empty as a person and convinced that everyone else is do better.

I happen to have seen him sever~~aa~~ times on television (though I missed this last S of the N) and know exactly what you are talking about. It is only my poor underprivileged wife who has not been able to benefit from the full splendor of the Tube Bobb. However, we have seen Emile de Antonio's movie about him and can enthusiastically recommend it as a faithful presentation not only of Nixon in the days when he was learning to be what he is now, but also of his Pretty Wife Pat, to coin a phrase fully as loaded as cottage cheese with catsup.

Since we Missed Out on the S of the N, we more than made up for it by hearing him clear through his Big Peace Plan last night. Very disturbing. We feel sure something like the Bay of Pigs or the Tonkin gulf is in the offing. Nothing else explains the timing: not the near-collapse of the governments in Laos and Cambodia, not his pre-primary need to reinforce his peacemaker image, not ~~xxxx~~ the increasing clamor about POWs and how they are being used as political pawns, not even your idea that he may be trying to get the Chinese to un-invite him to Peking. There are easier ways to take ^{care of} all these things. Look out.

I hope you're more hopeful.

Thanks a million for all the most interesting enclosures. Let's hope you've got the Lattimer thing turned around. The general silence is encouraging. Maybe a stray thought I had when Graham's interview~~x~~ first appeared may have some validity -- that the selection of an irrelevant character like Lattimer really shows how hard up they are for someone to do their little jobs for them. Wishful, perhaps, but maybe there's something to it. You yourself have pointed out how damaging it would be have a real expert like Wecht involved at this point. Do they realize that? If ~~xxx~~ they do, why use a ruptured duck like Lattimer? The only problem about shooting him down is getting a platform to shoot from, and that's a big one, of course, but can they count on it?

I think that with a couple of enclosures from Jenifer this brings us up to date. Best from us both, and take care of that ~~the~~ thumb and don't take any chances with the other one.

jdw