

26 July 1972

Dear Harold:

Odds and ends time again, through your 16.

First of all, I must remember to mention that we got an extra copy of Ramparts and mailed it at bulk mail rate today. The article is very long, wasteful to Xerox, and there probably are other things in this issue you'll be interested in. The NSA article has held up fairly well despite the big guns brought out against it. Peck (Fellwock) probably goes a bit too far in how many of the Soviet codes NSA has broken, but no one really has succeeded in shooting any serious holes in it thus far.

We also have sent you everything available here on Demo bugging, the Tallahassee arrests and anything else that looks like you might be remotely interested.

We agree that the Martha-John soap opera was a diversion to take some of the public attention from the bugging case, and that the press fell for it. Everyone had great fun. The enclosed brief and partial chronology Jenifer worked out several days may help to get the concept to jell. Our feeling is that Martha was only too glad to go along with the gag, and that the whole domestic situation was made up out of thin air. A skillful job.

We also agree that this took place at a time when Nixon and his crowd were trying to ascertain just where they stood, how much was inevitably going to be made public, and how to handle it. This sort of analysis takes time and the services of many very expert people, and the Martha-John heart throbs helped stall things off until things could be clarified. Then things began to happen, viz. Caddy and more recently Liddy. We think you're right: conflict of interest all over the place, with much more to come unless they can figure out how to hush it up.

The Eagleton disclosures yesterday and today about his past illness and shock treatment obviously is a quick response to a very intensive whispering campaign, typical of Murray Chobiner. Nixon's crowd is handling this with some skill, firm refusal to discuss personal details (and well they might want to avoid that, with Nixon having had psychiatric consultations following his defeat by Pat Brown in California) but leaving unlimited inferences open about the whole situation.

We have someone, presumably Howard, to thank for two long things from the New York Review of Literature, one on government policy in Vietnam by Naom Chomsky, and another by Izzy Stone on Nixon and Moscow. Please try to remember to thank him for us.

I agree with you that the Ockie note could have been the product of more than one person. No reason why not. I suppose that, although I remember considering the possibility that more than one person could have been involved while we were first studying it, I simply neglected to mention it because on the whole it was truly exceptionally well integrated in some ways.

We quite understand your desire to cut yourself off from those of the critical community where your experience shows them to be undependable, to put it mildly. No question about that, which is a matter for you to judge. My comments were made in a more general sense, as I'm sure you understand.

We think the McGovern-Eagleton response was the only sensible one, wisely done as soon as possible before the whispering campaign continued much longer, and that this is probably the first fruit of the dirty-trickery you've warned about so often. The press and other media have leaped on it like a starved animal. So much for media management protests about the Guild's endorsement of McG. Both locals headlined the whole thing as if Eagleton had been caught raping his grandmother, when all that has happened is that he's shown he has the good sense to go to his doctor when he's worked himself to a frazzle.

We are passing the opportunity to acquire the latest on Jackie, believing this is a trap designed to compile a more up-to-date mailing list and to measure response. We'd be glad to gratify your wish for an opinion of the content and probable purpose, but feel the price might be a bit high for what might be gained. We find no fault with your analysis of it.

In a memo to Bud dated 7/13/72 you ask "what is your hunch?" I assume this refers to something on the second page about possible press response to some new revelations regarding 399. I think experience shows that in general the press is very gunshy about anything of this nature, but that under certain circumstances it can respond to the interest it knows the public has in these matters. However, everything depends on circumstances, the political climate, what else is going on, and how easy the story is to tell without the medium itself appearing to get involved. I wouldn't count on anything.

One of the enclosures here is a June Ramparts article on What's left of the Black Left, first of two parts, second of which is in the August issue sent you separately earlier today. Plumb forgot about this earlier one when we mailed the August issue.

All for now, and best from us both,


jdw