

15 May 1973

Dear Harold:

Your letter of 11 May, written after your return from New York, came in today, and this is an attempt to get a brief answer off to you.

Your book has the sound of great potential, especially if you write your own book from your own special material. There'll probably be dozens of them, but one of them can be written only by you.

"Watergate: Fascism's Floodgate" suggests a picture but I don't like the repetition of gate. Substituting ~~Spillway~~ "Spillway" is no help. How about "Watergate: American Fascism Exposed." I don't think that's so hot either, but it's the best I can think of offhand.

In any case, I think you are correct in choosing a broader approach, showing that the Watergate incident is merely one boil that burst, not the basic sickness by any means. The sickness is the abuse of power and public tolerance for it. Its inevitable result is authoritarianism, which is the real enemy. The CIA is merely one expression of this trend, and is a menace because ~~of~~ it is not accountable and because it illegally engages in domestic operations. It will have to be a continuing part of your story, but need not assume such proportions that the result tends to ~~be exculpatory~~ exculpate our GL, as your friend fears. GL had no qualms about using it, being merely one more victim of the virus taking advantage of another victim. And the CIA was only one among many of the tools he has used. Exculpate ? Him ?

If you write this book, you will have to do it under forced draft, and I hope you will not hesitate ~~to~~ to forget about doing anything else, including writing to us and sending material as you have been doing. To continue as you have been doing would be impossible. Meanwhile we shall try to do anything we can, including sending whatever we think you might not have seen there in the normal course of events, especially if it bears on what you're working on.

Regardless of whether you get into this book right away, don't hesitate to drop us if you're pressed for time. We'll understand. Your contributions thus far have been enormous (we're still swamped) and we can gather nearly all we ever can use from the locals, the Times, and the copies of Time and Newsweek which we've been buying regularly. The Post is full of solid details we don't see elsewhere, but they're not that essential to grasping the main picture. If you can continue sending, fine. If not, don't worry. We'll be too busy to miss them. Enclosed is something to bring us more nearly abreast of the expenses you've been incurring on our behalf. Special thanks to Lil, by the way, for the way she kept it coming while you were in New York.

You mention the horrible problem of writing a book about a breaking story. Actually, you've chosen the only practical way of handling such a problem -- subordinate the breaking story to a larger theme, which is better perspective anyway and should, in the end, carry far greater impact. You know that no one else can write the book you can write. Lay on, MacDuff.

If this finds you already deep in it, just send a note saying, "busy as expected; see you later, Alligator." That'll do it. We'll be here if you need us and if we can help.

Best,

jdw