

19 May 1973

Dear Harold:

Replying to your various notes from 13 May through 15 May, the clipping we sent you on the 1962 campaign swindle engineered by Haldeman in California was from the Examiner, 17 May 1973. If you can't find, we'll make you another copy.

On the Senate Hearings, thus far we have taped on 7-inch reels at 1 7/8 ips the entire sessions, just in case we need for back-up purposes. However on the two days of sessions thus far we have not kept these full tapes. The session begins at 6:30 a.m. here, so we set a timer on the hi-fi assembly which is not too precise, so it has to be set quite a bit ahead of the right time to make sure it ~~comes~~ comes on when it should. We shall continue doing this, but don't expect to keep these tapes since the hearings may go on for months. There may be exceptions, such as Hunt, but whether to keep or not will be decisions that will be made at the time in each case.

Meanwhile, KPFA has a two-hour wrap-up at the end of each day, containing generous and uncut excerpts of the most meaningful of each day's proceedings. With two hours this can be very comprehensive, especially with a minimum of introductory and explanatory material. These wrapups we are taping on cassettes (120 mins is just right) and these we ARE saving. I am sure, for instance, that everything really useful out of McCord's six hours or so on the stand is included in the extensive excerpts for that day, the 18th. We heard the proceedings live, and monitored the wrapup today, and can recall nothing left out that seemed important.

On the first day we had three recorders going -- the big 7-incher on the live proceedings, a cassette machine ditto for excerpts we might need (not knowing, that first day, just what to expect) and a second ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ 7-incher getting Mae Brussell. Total confusion. In other words, we have enough equipment, such as it is, to be able to tape the proceedings in case they're needed fairly soon (we expect to keep them a day or two in most cases, just in case) and pick up special other stuff on cassette machines. If and when Hunt testifies, we'll get every word, on two machines if necessary, and KEE P it for minute examination later. AND ANYBODY ELSE WHO SEEMS THAT INTERESTING.

Hunt: We agree with you that he seems to be a brave lad ~~as~~ as long as he has great power behind him, and may crack when he feels it has left him on his own. We have been watching for any such sign, and thus far have detected none we could feel held real meaning. What puzzles us is the way he seems to be consistently plugging the line that Watergate was some sort of a CIA operation, in contrast with McCord's vehement stand that it wasn't. Much depends, of course, on how much dirt he has on Nixon, how far back it goes, and how much clout he still carries with the CIA crowd, if any. To me, these are unknown quantities, so much so that his apparent adherence to the line that Watergate was a CIA job appears incongruous if not actually contradictory in some respects. Wish we knew more about the actual role his wife played. Mae Brussell, by the way, says flatly and without qualification (as in "the sun is shining") that she was murdered in the plane crash. Period.

About the investigative reporting on the Watergate, it is of course difficult to be sure from this distance, but from what we've seen, especially in relation to the leads we know you have given many reporters, our impression agrees strongly with yours, that there has been more ~~skillful~~ skillful exploitation of leaks than original reporting. When I was in Washington during the war the news profession already was more handout minded than enterprising, and every tendency and trend prevailing since then can only have made a bad situation worse. The problem is that publishing is a business. Reporters are answerable to editors, who are answerable to publishers, who are answerable to boards of directors, who think only in terms of balance sheets and big advertising contracts. I think the one thing that has to be said in possible defense of the reporters who failed to follow up leads you gave them is that a) some of them may have been peripheral to what appeared to be the main story at that particular time, and that b) the judgment of the reporters (and their editors) involved may have been swayed profoundly by resistance to the story from on high in the publishing business. Nixon had declared war on the press, the business office knew it, and no businessman moves in a situation like that until he can see some prospect of emerging something better than busted.

While the showing of the press on Watergate has been conspicuously less than glorious, I do think it has shown more common sense and judgment than in the JFK and other assassinations, if not much more courage. I personally feel that the media never have failed so utterly as in covering the assassination, unless it be the earlier story of the flying saucers. If we go down, it will be central in our collapse that our media pursued to the end the myth that something is ^{never} ~~is/son~~ untilk some iron-bottomed official actually says it's so.

If there is any enterprise in Watergate coverage, it stems from the subconscious disgust that has built up in newsmen over the years from having to give deadpan factual treatment to what they knew in their hearts, in many cases, was fantasy, which made them a little more willing to ask another question, ~~how~~ to juxtapose contradictory official poses, to qualify pompous platitudes just a little more than necessary, to leave unanswered questions recognizable as such -- in other words, indicate to anyone interested that here was another load of horseshit if the reader was old enough to know that when he saw it. There are times, unfortunately, when pros working for businessmen can do little more if they want to keep on working.

In earlier notes I've already said about all I can think of in regard to your projected book. At any rate I can;t seem to scare up any new thoughts, my main feeling being that your book will necessarily be different from anyone else's because of your own background and experiences, so it would be wrong not to mold it along those lines and convert its difference into a virtue. Keep it as simple and uncomplicated (ha!) as possible, because the average paisano has little conception of the strange world into which you will take him. Spell it out where you have to, but always drag him back to where he can see the general picture as you develop it. I visualize a short book, the shorter the better in some respects. Which is more difficult, but more easily accepted. Now aren't you sorry you asked ?

Best,



jdw