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JDW, HR,

11/16/76

Instead of reading some clippings before going to bed I share a few thoughts, probably misgivings, about the new House committee.

You will not detect them in today's letter to Sprague after I heard of the alleged destruction of King assassination evidence. I still know very little about it. The first news account was explicit enough: they had proof, attributed later to Ozer and later there was Sprague's playdown.

11/17 Here I was interruptee by a long call then to bed. In bed I thought about the reported destruction and it seemed to me this is much too soon for them to have learned anything at all like this. It came out, I learned today, because a member went into it. Sounds like Gonzalez, primed, though I did not ask.

Sprague was tied up with a meeting at the time of our working lunch. It was 2:30 before he was free. While JL and I were first there I got to talking to a staffer and suggested what had happened in the course of a conversation on pitfalls: that it was Lane and that it was the destruction of the Memphis Police Intel. Unit files. That was it. Well, those files undoubtedly contain reports on the spying on King, a la Frame-Up, but on the assassination I'm certain not and thus the great one has led another body into what can hurt it.

Jim and I walked to his place for lunch and then back. We met with Sprague from 2:30 to close to 4:00, with Rick Feeney there in only most of the time. The emphasis was still on questioning Foreman, with a little on what could come from Ray later and a very fine statement of his position personally and with regard to Ray from Jim. He did it very well, I thought. I had told him earlier that I'd prefer to say nothing unless it was necessary. The guy who caused all the trouble was not there. He walked past a few times on our first stop and said nothing except a perfunctory hello.

Sprague is still a poker face. He also has to say things his way, with explanations much longer than required by either of us. Once or twice when it was obvious and I could anticipate I jumped ahead and he said he'd come to that. He did mostly.

There were some assurances on protecting Ray's rights but I'm without confidence in their word. Sprague backed off on assurances of confidentiality, saying only he'd do what he could. I made it a point of getting Jim to discuss Ray's rationality now. I added to it. My reason is, that they expect too much they can't get. This is clear to me. But I wonder if they believe anything. As well as if they were baiting.

Despite their mandate and the fact that they exist there is much that is unreal. One example is that they have yet to ask me a word about JFK. Or what to read. Or not to. One of their researchers said she knew me because she had read my book. She is, she said, hipped on JFK's assassination. Another had read Frame-Up. A borrowed copy. The assistant chief counsel knew about my spectro suit from Howard's book, which I'd recommended they use as a staff primer.

When I realized this newest insanity had to be a Lane ploy I told Jim before we went there that I'd be giving them no more as things now are. After we left I told him for usre. In part because Sprague's explanation was they did not pick up Jim's briefs because they did not want to appear to be partisans in Memphis! (My suggestion ^{had} been that they read both side pronss.) And these lawyers? A lawyer who becomes a partisan by reading a brief or plea? When there was mention of destruction I reminded Rick that my first recommendation, 9/15, was that they paper the towns with duces tecum subpoenas. Sprague smiled and ~~xxx~~ said I didn't know all they'd done. Well, I did know that he had not and instead has written please kinds sirs letters.

Jim has no choice with what else we've learned. He has to file a complaint against Lane with the NY bar. He not only conned his way in to see Ray without asking counsel's permission, he got Ray to sign a release. Ray has back out on some, thinking all, and Mark has yet to tell Jim. Mark has to be really crazy for this one. It should mean trouble for him.

Best,

JW