PFM

Changing Lives, Minds, and Communities through Jesus Christ

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Mr. Geoff Shepard
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Dear Geoff,

Following your letter to me, I ordered a copy of *The Secret Plot to Make Ted Kennedy President*. When it arrived I skimmed it, thinking that I really didn't want to spend all my time plodding down memory lane—so many of the memories are painful.

But over the 4th of July weekend I had some free time and I couldn't resist. I read the book cover to cover. I was astonished at the careful research job you've done. This must have taken you years. It would have to be a real passion on your part to help set the record of Watergate straight.

I had a lot of first-hand encounters with the Watergate special prosecutors. I saw much evidence of what you write about. But no one before has put it all together and made such a careful analysis. I do not know how widely read your book will be because I don't know how many people care about whether there was a plot to get Nixon or not. But historians should really take account of this book.

I saw lots of signs of a "get Nixon" bias. Some of the people I worked with were driven to that end. Even Jaworski was, though he may well have been a figurehead for the real zealots. In January of 1974, he called me in. My conversion had been widely publicized, and he told me that he understood about those things because he grew up in Texas where everybody was born again. He was glad for me. He told me that he thought I might like to go back to my old life practicing law, in effect, just enjoy being a Christian. I knew instantly what he was talking about. With a misdemeanor my license wouldn't have been affected in the slightest. What he wanted, of course, and he was very explicit about this, was a plea and testimony that would convict the real offenders. I don't remember the exact words he used, but it was very clear to me he was after Nixon.

For reasons I cannot explain even today, I wasn't in the slightest tempted, even though I would have loved to have had Watergate off my back. What he wanted was testimony against Nixon, and I didn't have any. To confirm the plot line that the

special prosecutors were working on would have required me to lie, which I would not do to save my own skin under any circumstances. In addition to which I had even then great loyalty to Nixon. Three times in the conversation I remember him saying 'the train is leaving the station.' And of course it did. Three months later I was indicted, interestingly enough on only two counts as compared to 20 or 30 counts that others had in the conspiracy. I was, as one of the Watergate special prosecutors, Henry Ruth, confided to me after the tapes were released, only a tangential connection to the conspiracy.

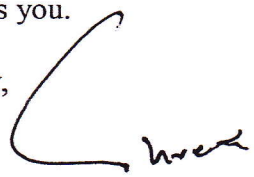
When I was called as a witness of the court (neither side wanted to vouch for me) Ben-Veniste did a pretty good job of trying to shake my testimony. I never gave him the slightest hint that I would say anything supportive of him or for that matter of the conspirators. But a number of things he said to me during that period confirmed what he later wrote in his book, that Nixon was the "big enchilada."

I don't know how well you make the Kennedy connection here except by inference and some reasonable presumptions along the way. I don't really think that's going to be the lasting impact of your book. Kennedy will escape any involvement because he's got a bigger than life image with the media, and will have with historians, particularly if he dies of brain cancer. But the whole travesty of the way the Watergate special prosecutors worked desperately needs to be exposed. Everybody has the idea that Ken Starr ran an inquisition. His was the model of probity in comparison with Cox, Jaworski, et al. This was nothing less than a witch hunt.

Thank you for doing this, Jeff. Nothing we say or do now is going to change what is the strongly rooted public perception about things. But I think in the cold light of day, a generation or two from now, your book will have a major impact. I'm sure you did it as a labor of love, and I congratulate you. It is very well-written as well.

God bless you.

Sincerely,



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