

March 12, 1964

Mr. Clay Blair, Jr.
Curtis Publishing Company
666 Fifth Avenue
New York 19, New York

Dear Clay:

Alas, my lips are sealed. The whole business was strictly on a sealed-lips basis, as you know, and if I so much as hinted that JFK was in any way involved, I'd be run out of town. For good reason, too---there are certain rules of the game that you just can't break if you want to go on earning a living here. If anyone asked me if The Man was in any way personally involved in the episode, I would flatly and hotly deny it---for that matter, I've denied it already.

No, I sent the ms. to Himself as a Christmas present, through Charlie. It has long since been reduced to ashes. It would have made an interesting footnote to history, at that.

About the White House insiders, I'm sure we were dead right to opt out of the bidding for Sorensen and Schlesinger---neither of them is worth six figures. I have a suggestion about Salinger. As I told Norm Ritter when he was here the other day, Pierre has a fascinating minute-by-minute story to tell about what happened on the plane, with the six Cabinet officers aboard, when the news of the President's shooting caused Rusk to turn it around over the Pacific. Lots of really first class drama.

Salinger is, I think,,committed to stick with LBJ at least until after November. Meanwhile, he must be going a bit balmy, seeing Sorensen and Schlesinger

getting away with the cream. I'd suggest offering him a pretty fat sum--say, \$10,000, maybe \$15,000--for the plane piece alone. This is one he could do while he is still press secretary, and we could put the money in escrow for him, as we did for Arthur Schlesinger. I'm sure he could do a damn good piece, and whether or not we finally bought rights to the book he plans eventually, we would be in the position of beating Look and Life with a White House Insiders' piece, instead of the other way round.

But on that other matter, it must remain Top Secret, Eyes Only, Burn After Reading, and so on. I hope the two or three others up there who were in on it understand that.

Best,

Stewart Alsop

SA: dstg

Imagine, if you will, the joy to you just a few weeks before the year, starting with the publication of a digital copy of the manuscript. It would certainly be as well as stiff, if it were, the...
 progressive liberals who refuse to...
 would be a great asset.