

28 April 1966

Dear Dave,

It was good to hear from you after a long silence. I won't be able to reply at equal length tonight but I did not wish to delay sending you the reference on Serge Fliegers. You will find what you want in CE 1144; I indexed the document under "Gray, Barry," no wonder you couldn't find it.

Congratulations on your new apartment; I'm sure you did need extra space for the WR data. I have gradually filled a large closet; and, like you, had to buy a swivel chair a few months ago.

Like you, I had been growing increasingly uneasy about Ramparts; in fact, because of another development, I put Ramparts out of my mind completely, convinced that if and when they ever pulled themselves together and issued something, it would be anticlimatic, anachronistic, and irrelevant. That is mainly because Ed Epstein's book will be out very soon, and it will be a new ballgame. I no longer have any reservations whatever about Ed; he has a different personality and a different emotional threshold. But there is no rule that everyone must have carbon copies of our attitudes, evaluations, or emotions. And, after seeing what Ed has accomplished, the differences of degree or the shadings of what seemed incomprehensible detachment, those things no longer matter at all. For what Ed has produced, I think he deserved only gratitude and support, from all of us.

As I say, I had discounted and stopped thinking about Ramparts. Meanwhile, Maggie told me that they had engaged Emmet Collins. I must say that I was incredulous at the ass-backwardness of hiring a complete novice. Your description of your contacts with him only strengthen my impression. Very recently, however, my indifference re Ramparts turned into serious concern and alarm. Apparently they got wind of a very important new discovery made by someone on this coast, through indiscretion. I had been told about it and asked to keep it strictly secret. Although I realize that the information has leaked out to a few people, I still want to respect the obligation I assumed not to talk about it, and I apologize for being so cryptic with you. The reason I mention it at all is that I was really shocked and appalled to hear that Ramparts, or persons associated with Ramparts, were thinking in terms of "public domain" and preemptive disclosure of the information which was disclosed thanks either to the trusting nature of the person who uncovered it, or to betrayal of his interests. The person who found the information has already written it up and contracted for publication (in a very short time); I feel pretty sure that no one will be able to preempt and publish, because of the simple time factor. But the very thought that anyone is even considering such a dirty trick is more distressing to me than I can say. I am very much afraid that in some cases the purity of purpose or singleminded commitment to the destruction of the WR has become quite tainted with self-interest—including the profit motive. For example, I know for a fact that Mark Lane has attempted to steal papers from a fellow-researcher, and that he has also tried to blackmail—out and out blackmail—to get what he didn't succeed in stealing. I am so sorry and disgusted to even appear to be in the same camp with such a ruthless and utterly evil man.

Dave, all of us have worked as hard and as indefatigably as our personal capacities permitted. All of us have contributed something. All of us can feel vindicated in the knowledge that will soon--very soon--become public, that our intuition and our reasoning and our analysis was completely right. There is enough credit and satisfaction to go around. If some of us (and this should really be addressed to others, not to you) allow ourselves to become victims of personal vanity and pettiness, we will disintegrate into angry and back-biting factions--at the very moment when we should all do everything to protect our unity as a group, and lend each other every possible support.

My appraisal is that the new developments, in effect, completely scrap my 500-page manuscript, in which I have poured a great deal of labor. This has come about at a time when I have been invited by three publishers, two of them among the major prestigious houses, to submit my ms. I do not plan to submit it, since I believe that events have left such an attack on the WR far behind. Truthfully and sincerely, I do not regret for a single heartbeat that my work no longer matters--that I will not publish nor be within miles of the limelight that will soon focus on some of my friends and colleagues--because all I have ever wanted is fulfilled, or soon will be, and I feel only that I want to do everything in my power to help see that the best possible results ensue.

I am afraid that I have lapsed into sermonizing which is not directed at you, Dave, but merely an expression of my anxiety and distress about recent contacts with some of the others, at widely separated geographical points. You will understand why I am not more specific, when I am basing myself on an impression rather than explicit fact, and in fact I may have misunderstood completely and may be doing an injustice to the person or persons concerned. What I do hope, Dave, is that you personally share my feeling that the paramount issue is to get the WR destroyed, regardless of which person or which publication deals the final blow; and that if the opportunity should arise, you will wish to emphasize the urgency of unity among us, and the tragic consequences of falling out at the very moment of triumph. I do beg you, Dave, to do everything you can to prevent that, if you see any signs developing. We are all dog-tired, tense, and just fertile for misunderstandings and reproaches--but we must not allow such a disaster to occur.

I wanted to say all this because you have always shared what you learned, very openly and generously, and I have appreciated it. I have never kept my work secret but I have to respect secrecy imposed on me by others and, in this moment of time, for reasons which I regard as entirely valid (as opposed to Jones' secrecy for secrecy's sake).

Returning to your letter--no, I don't know of anyone recommended by Penn Jones, in fact I didn't know that a second person had been hired. I haven't heard from Penn for a very long time. It is pretty sad when the "co-ordinator" Mr Collins has to consult the basic report because he doesn't even know the names of the legal staff. It is almost farcical. I heard that Fred Cook is out, that he had a falling-out with Ramparts, and is trying to interest other periodicals in his article. This minute, I cannot even recall where I heard that or from whom. Buchanan, from what you tell me, belongs in the same isolation ward as Mark Lane--again, I wish they were not in our camp. It is no secret that I always regarded the Paris Match/Buchanan thing with serious reservations, at times, as pure folly; the proof of the pudding is that it has made absolutely no difference in this country, which is where the only meaningful action can occur. Every other country in the world more or less knew the score from the first. Live and learn, as you say; with some of our co-workers for friends, we don't need enemies. Yes, Weisberg's book is good, but no publisher so far, and like my own manuscript, I fear it is now anachronistic. My warm regards,