4/9/70

Dear Ed,

While neither of us has the time for Skolnick-like digressions, those few of us working seriously in the field in which I am and all the people who can benefit from the establishment of truth (which here is no intellectual concept alone but involves the integrity of society and its very nature) are in your debt for alerting me as you did early the morning of the 21st. Without it I doubt I'd have been as aware as I was when he pulled his WCFL ploy and filed that fake suit. Aside from the damage to me, there was and remains the greatest potential for the most serious harm in that entirely spurious action. Because of the time he has spent in legal research, the provokes wonder, disturbs me deeply, for, while I get the impression of a great ego, I do not get nor have I reason to believe he is this thoroughgoingly incompetent.

However, for the m nt, let us forget motive.

Wehst is the simple fact?

His is no suit et all. He hadn't ever asked the Archives for anything. The first thing I did after learning of the suit was establish this. He is totally unknown there, has never written them a letter about anything.. How, then, can he charge suppression, in any way, including in court? Over and above this, the law is clear on certain points, vague on others. With the Archives the regulations are specific. They are also simple. The law requires each of these steps be taken as a precondition of suit. Anybody can file any kind of suit for payment of the proper fee, but successful, serious litigation also requires the meeting of these legal prerequisites. He hadm't, had made no effort to and, as I learned y sterday, was entirely unaware of them. So much for his research and perhaps I have addressed motive.

I started .aying the foundation for suits in 1966. Had I been able to get a lawyer, I'd probably have filed many of them. But I soon learned the mere filing of the suit is not the thing, it is achieving the purpose of the suit. I have, without suit, where I may not have with suit. And, once I got a lawyer, I became even more careful. I am in a position to file a number of suits but haven't and am, instead, proceeding administratively, tediously. There are some I want to file, for there is no other way in certain areas. But in these cases it is absolutely essential to proceed in certain supercautious ways, to avoid the Skolnick syndrome, which is fatal. I spent enough time to write a book trying to salvage the incompetent suit filed by an expert pathologist whose lawyer was a judge. Fortunately, it attracted no attention at all and we have not been hurt, and they are now starting from scratch again. This is an inevitable consequence when the litigent regards himself as Messiah in this field, when his ego dominates. My reason for that great and wasteful labor is the same as my worry with Skolnick. Can you imagine the consequences of the great publicity a government victory in any such case? Can you realize the effect on the willingness of ordinary people or the media to credit anything we'd thereafter say? Whe Garrison, with no preparation at all and less than the most serious purposes did the same thing in January 1969, I had to really work. I wrote a book in two weeks and won the suit for him. (I can't get that the hottest book yet, printed).

Sp, Skolnick presented problems other than in the damage he did me.

I take this time not only because it is your due but because there are ways in which you can yet help and I hope you cnan find the time.

My initial instinct was wrong. It was to fight fire with fire, to

expose S for the self-seeker he is. Fortunately, circumstances prevented this. It was 11:30 at night when I learned of the suit. And the next day I had some things I absolutely had to do. One was to consult my lawyer and the main thing was to have an EEG. After going to bed and while driving to Washington the next day I had time to think it through. Meanwhile, all I did was phone one reporter friend in Chicago. My finances preclude phone calls, but this is one who could accept a reversal of charges, who I have backgrounded for years, etc. He told me what he knew, adding that when S learned he was my friend, S traded heavily on my name but by inference only. He also gave me an idea of the attention this suit and its publicity was getting on the all-news radio stations. Considerable.

Yesterday morning, after reading of the Metromedia involvement, I tried to reach people I knew in Metromedia, to alert them to what they had become involved in. They were unavailable, so I decided to try and call Witz, manager of WCFL, whose identity I learned from trade sources. He was not in and I got Hagan, news director, who seems like a decent guy. I laid it out straightforwardly to him. When I was able to tell him in part exactly what was attached to the suit I had never seen he understood I knew what I was talking about. He had Dahn, the reporter who worked with S., phone me back later. I think we have established a basis of trust and I am satisfied they are concerned and understand the danger of what they have become involved in- and do not want it. We'll have to wait and see what eventuates. But I told them they were welcome to come here or send anyone they trust and see what I have. I went farthur and asked them to send me states of the documents S filed, predicting we'd find the same xeroxing characteristics in them they'd find in my originals, for I know Skolnick didn't ask the Archives for anything, I know he got what I had from my friend Trunzo on his word he was going to carry the investigation forward (not do what he did do), and I think it unlikely he had anypne else write the Archives for him to duplicate my work, which is easy enough. But this is the kind of ego that overlooks such simple niceties.

In any event, I had avoided all those things I could have done with media friends, avoided all the reporters I know, etc., and did just this. I also wrote Witz early yesterday a.m, wrote Lucht a brief letter, wrote the President of Columbia College, S. having involved them in his plagiarism, etc. And, after I phoned Hagan,, he apparently phoned S. S immediately assumed I was phoning everyone in the world, especially all of the Chicago pres, and he said as much. I let him talk for a while, saying nothing.

Here I flash back to something I learned as a very young man. When I was in OSS, my first job was a belated defnse of four very brave men who had volunteered for a certain-death assignment and had been framed by the MPs after a simple brawl. They had lost through all the channels of military justice and all of Donovan's big legal brains had failed. In less than six weeks, without leaving the office, I got all of this reversed. To do this I drew upon earlier experience investigating cartels. The secret was and the answer was in semantics. Since then I have been more than usually alert to this device. Skolnick is one of its practitioners, to me an amateur and a rank, telegraphing amateur at it. When he phoned I switched the tape on and some day you can here it. He began with the cheapskate allegation I had accused him of slandering me, a rather transpartent effort to provoke a reaction he didn't get, then glibly claimed, repeating the word many times, that he had never seen my "manuscript", until, when he had eliminated any possibility of my being wrong in my own mind I blew up at him and told him unless he stopped playing such childish games with me there was no purpose in the conversation. I will not try and give you all of it, but he even tried to pretend he doesn't know some of his own associates! He pretended not to know Trunzo, the man from whom he got this material, pretended the phone calls of which Trunzo had informed me, before and after this ego-trip, did not exist, and other even snobbier things. He then assured me he wasn't mad at me! Why, he asked, was I disturbed. I told him to be under no misapprehension, that I was

certainly mad at him. Why? "Because you are a crook". I called him a crook perhaps a dozen times. He never once displayed any resentment, which to me is a clear sign. And he never abandoned the evasion, never once spoke directly, and invariably tried to swith (he is glib at it) to something else whenever I nailed him. On several points I took the time to insist and he tried to talk over me each time.

In all of this he made no effort to show me this was his own work and, in fact, he failedm even to claim it.

He also claimed I was calling all the media and defaming him, so I dared him to sue me. I told him is is a crook and he and I both knew I'd prove it. So he dropped that pretty quickly. I also laid out how he'd damage all of us, and he was totally silent when I showed him his legal incompetence. I went further and told him some of the fact he didn't know and I think he must have been embarrassed to know that the source of the federal stuff he had stolen is precisely the source he is accusing of suppressing precisely that. His response was to suggest I was an agent of the government and could appear as a witness for them. What an egocentric skunk! Everybody is an agent but him.

I don't know why he called me. I suspect he felt he could con me. Perhaps my call to Hagen forced his hand. Anyways, I think by now he is entirely without the support he had and he will be under pressure to withdrew the suit. WCFL made me offers to really go after him, to expose the whole thing, and I declined them. Please treat this as confidential. I have no interest in hurting that rascal. My intent to is reduce the damage he has done to the minimum and eliminate the further possibilities for greater damage that still exist. It is not to hurt him, richly as he has earned it. You know, with me deep in debt, that bastard had the gall to complain that while he is a poor man I am rich on the harvest of my words and my resentment is that he has xxxkinxx reduced my chance for profit!

Besides, simply going after him would not accomplish constructive purposes, at least not at this point.

It is my hunch they will undertake a rather difficult chore, trying to persuade him, as quietly as possible, ot withdraw his suit. If I felt I could be part of this, as I am inclined to think I should not be because of my personal involvement, I think I could suggest a simple formulation that would do it, but his ego will have to be subdued before he'll consider it. I have known other men of good minds and unfortunately deformed bodies who also develop this kind of ego. It doubles the tragedy of the deformity.

This, pretty much, is where it rests now. Day will soon be dawning and I must get to other things. However, aside from this serving as a memo for me, I hope it also indicates to you the delicacy of the situation, the hazard still presented to what I regard as a minimum natuonal need and the ways in which, if you can find a the time, you can still help. I need those things I asked of you. Perhaps you can find the entire WRSV tape. If not, I'd certainly a preciate the part you made. WCGL is sending me theirs and I think a copy of the suit with attachments. I also need any press available, as ecially interviews and direct quotes. And there remain unarticulate questions to be answered. Thanks for what you have done and for anything you may yet do. Sorry about the typos. Hope you can dope them out without great waste of time.

Sincerely,