Mr. Howard Pray
Fund for Investigative Journalism
1346 Connecticut Ave., NW 10th floor
Washington, D.C. 20036

3/23/77

Dear Howard,

I think that in the past I've asked you if you know somone I can get for an assistant. This is an update-reminder for further thinking.

As I told you, I was under the impression John Hanrahan had bought a house in Maryland. I did speak to him Monday. He is tied up into if not through May.

Yesterday I did hear from Zebra. We are to talk more about their offer today. They have decided to go for the book and they will want more. We discussed this more when they were here. They asked me to contract three more books in a year. I demurred for various reasons ranging from the interference this would mean with promotions to the restrictions it would place on my litigation. However, if I had a good ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ assassistant this might have been possible. If the first one goes well...

There are going to be problems of which Zebra is not aware and of which I could not tell them more than the hint they ignored. They are pulling the plugs on a Fensterwald book that is a bummer. Unless the extensive promos sell it there is nothing to sell it. Or recommend it. The coauthor read a short passage about me to me and I think there was no single taint of accuracy. What this means is that I must strive even more to do ~~xxxx~~ the best with this one or they may turn off.

It and the topicality also indicate speed. Speed involves the two kinds of assistance I want and have not found. One is a sort of gofer to find records when I need them, locate facts in my files, etc. Getting up to look is not more of an interruption. Keeping up with the daily accumulations is also a need. I've almost run out of space for stacks of the to-be-filed. The second is a sort of editor. I think the real need is for a literate person who can be sensitive to the problems created by the verbal style I have developed and to confabulations. (I did tell Zebra about this and they are figuring on it as a cost.) Sometimes the stuff comes out convoluted and I am not sensitive to it because of what is in my mind. So comprehensibility is also something to be spotted. If I can do this or have it done before the rough is retyped it can not only speed things up it can reduce the costs considerably.

I think I have evolved a simpler book. Certainly a shorter one. It is based on unprecedented materials obtained in an unprecedented manner. But the volume alone plus my extensive prior work and files will make the kinds of problems indicated above.

While at this point I can make no guarantees there seems to be the prospect that there may be a future for a literate and intelligent assistant. For a recent journalism graduate or a law student or one wanting to go to law school later I think there can be the kind of benefit that comes from an apprenticeship.

If there is a local man or woman - and there is no heavy work - I have not been able to locate one through the local schools. This means that from another area a car would be required. Were there a choice this would mean better for the Rockville-Gaithersberg area. But it is about an hour from Maryland, less from AU.

A library science student is another possibility. All of this is going to be a university archive. One able to start putting it in order could be of great value. I have file cabinets full of CIA and FBI records I've not had a chance to even skim.

I do not intend to be asking the seemingly impossible. I do intend to try to jog your mind and not in my interest only. Association with perhaps four books is not a bad way to begin a working life. For one who can write these files are rich for the future, when I'll not be able to use them....Thanks for the time and thought,

Sincerely,