

1/24/75

Dear Mac,

If I do not for a moment believe you are unaware of the problems serving on the select committee on the CIA brings you, as well as the opportunities it provides; and if I am without doubt about the degree of sophistication you take to this new obligation, I do feel that there may well be hazards of which you may have no inkling as well as fact that should be investigated that to date has not been even indicated.

I do hope the resolution covers more than the CIA and FBI for the military was never really investigated when the Ervin subcommittee went into it years ago.

A fair amount of what proofs I have developed comes from situations in which in the past you tried to help me.

Ann will remember that she asked your father to consult me when a client, the Rockville Sand & Gravel Co., was being sued for dynamite damage that was not dynamite damage. My records of sonic boom damage may have been helpful in winning that case, for I testified from these records. You may or may not remember that you tried to help me get relief from the sonic booms that distressed your boys, then infants, as well as my chickens and Lil. Well, I finally got a lawyer I was finally able to persuade to file for discovery prior to the settlement of our suit and in this I discovered that the Air Force, of all things, had a special file on me aside from that relating to the claims I made. Well, what business do they have having any kind of special file on me? And what business did they have referring others to it when I made a claim?

The U.S. Attorney lied when we asked for this file on discovery, saying it did not exist. The discovery material identified it completely. There was a settlement before I could press this to its conclusion, but I may get it by other means. It may or may not be relevant. I think it probably is. I knew a man who was one of these countless domestic military spooks and they spied on everyone, even each other. He served in Maryland. When last I saw him he worked in Frederick. To give you the flavor: he had to go to work once several hours early. He caught another military agent tapping the phones of his unit. He threw his pistol on the intruder and his unit kept the fellow soldier prisoner all day.

After your surgery in the summer of 1965 you read the manuscript of my first book and tried to help me with it. You found considerable resistance one place you went but succeeded in having a grudging invitation extended to me. I have wondered since why I got the kind of unwelcome reception I received and since I have been alert to explanations. This is one of the areas where I think you may develop personal problems from your new duty. I'll explain it to you if you want me to. And I do think it relates to an only partly exposed operation where I have done much work and do have solid proofs. If you become interested in this I want you to know that people can be hurt but that a subpoena can eliminate that hurt. I can tell you where and on whom to serve a duces tecum subpoena and what it will lead to. You should clearly understand that it is hairier than you can have any reason to believe and quite sensational. And that in this I am jeopardizing a book I've had almost drafted since I had to lay the conclusions aside in September for my work on the Ray case and then with the new book. (I do hope you've had time to read the transcript. I did not tell the whole Russell story in it.)

While I could encapsulate this for you, I do not think that would be satisfactory. I think you should know the story as fully as I can tell it. It spiders out considerably. Into many Watergate aspects and with a number of Watergate figures. It leads to a man you once offered to introduce me to. I feel ellipsis is necessary in your interest for the moment and I fear you may not recall back to your House days. But once we met in the room Members have for meeting people and this man, who figured in the work I was then doing, was there. He has since become considerable more prominent. Andy Kopkind was also there and you introduced us. You offered to introduce me to this important Member and I had no desire for it.

You were much more sophisticated than I back in those days about a decade ago. I was more trusting and unwilling to believe there could be the excesses now partly public. You may not remember it but you finally said that as soon as I left a publisher's office a federal agent walked in. That may or may not have happened but other things did.

At two of the publishing houses recently identified as having CIA connections I was told by the top editorial people that my first book would be a best-seller but there was a rejection. These are Praeger and McKay. The editorial chief at McKay was a former OSS (headquarters) man who knew me from the first job I did in OSS, although we had never met. His letter predicting the book would be a best-seller is one of those on the inside back cover of Whitewash. There are other publishers there may be reason to believe were with CIA involvements in those days. And not only publishers, in publishing. I believe that one CIA operation had to do with preventing publication, what you suspected of the FBI 10 years ago. I have names, addresses and other leads for you. One of the names is now known throughout the world.

Not long after my work attracted international attention I learned of a still unexposed type of superficially legitimate CIA domestic surveillance. They had, whether or not it still exists, a cover for this and they used commercial services. Here I can produce and identify witnesses, have transcripts and tapes of conversations, bills rendered, checks in payment, carbons of what I said that were ordered and paid for, envelopes in which checks were mailed - the whole bit. While it was all clandestine, all of what I have I obtained properly. The national manager of this commercial service actually told me, with Jim Lesar hearing it, that I have or hold "the all-time track record" for CIA interest. He disclosed also an intimate knowledge of my work and the CIA's interest in it as well as their strong reaction to it.

I have been wanting to do something about this, regarding it as a serious intrusion into my First-Amendment rights. Until recently it has not been possible. But three weeks ago Jim Lesar and I saw CIA general counsel Warner. He played games with us, I told him so, only more politely, gave him leads to check, and he was supposed to have been back in touch with us. If there is not some satisfactory redress of this grievance we propose suing. If they do not deliver what I have asked for under the Freedom of Information law we will sue for that, too. And here I have copies of some and proofs, so it should not be a complete futility. I think it can provide the means for bringing more to light, through discovery.

We should also be able to take some interesting depositions! If we have to, we are not unwilling to try.

The intermingling of foreign and national or domestic activities is something else of which you ought be aware because the pretext for secrecy and sometimes the cover is foreign activity, considered proper. I have enough here to leave no doubt at all, specifics including names and addresses.

I am more than pleased that you will be part of it because this new investigation goes to the integrity of society and is another aspect of the creeping authoritarianism than has long interested you. I am also delighted at the opportunity it gives you. We do wish you the best of luck and offer any help possible.

If you want to talk to me about this, please let me know.

Our best to you all,

Harold Weisberg