

3/11/76

Mr. Bernard Fensterwald  
910 16 St., NW, 6th floor  
Washington, D.C. 20006

Dear Bud,

The copying of the largely-unread draft of the Watergate book has just been completed. When I give it to Jim I'll give him the receipts. I'll be away the first part of next week. If he doesn't come here first I'll take it to him the first time I go to DC.

The aborting of the Playboy project for an account of Jimmy's life as the man with the longest stretch in solitary and a repetition of some of what he testified to may or may not contribute to the very bad piece they now have in draft. I warned them first by phone as soon as I read the first part and, when there was silence, in writing this morning. They'll have it by the time you can get this or earlier.

When their initial plan and my proposal to them of the ancillary use of parts of Post Mortem did not come to anything, they evolved what was presented to me as a series on violence in the U.S. I then agreed to act as their consultant. By the time they were finished chewing it over and up and there was a major editorial shift it was a series on assassinations. In each of the three pieces on which they have used me they have waited until too late for the kinds of changes needed. The doctrine was a bad and dishonest one, too, and there was nothing I could do about that. The two JFK pieces are in manufacture and now there is the one on King. I've read the 1st 27 pages and I'm told there are about 15 more. They should have been here by now and are now. I spent an afternoon and to after 7 one day earlier this week reading comments and corrections to the researcher in Playboy's office.

Jim McKinley phoned me Saturday night. He said that he had planned to include the fact that you had paid most of the costs and that Jim and I, working without an pay, had done most of the legal and investigative work - but that Playboy told him they feared you would sue. I told him and them this is nonsense but were there a basis why had you not been called? I added that it would be indecent not to credit Jim.

They have taken an incredible line. It pretends all is their own work and that they have interviewed Jimmy (without saying so, by a silly structure that rips Hueie off) and they quote him directly. This includes on things he has never said and on the opposite of what he has always said.

The approach is wretchedly bad, with a shallow pretense of giving Jimmy's side. Thus far I have seen no reference to either the defense of any period, even to the hearing, or to his ever having had a lawyer! No mention of Hanes and Foreman and the one to Hueie hangs in the air, related to nothing except an ~~in~~ inaccurate payment to Ray.

I don't think you should do anything about this. I do think you should know. It might be a good idea if you would let me tell them for you that you think they should credit Jim for what he has done. But you won't now be able to reach me in time unless you call and leave word for me in New York. I will get it at 212/TR3-9806, where I'll be staying. I'll be working on other things during the day, including getting duplicates of my pictures that you ~~ex~~ used during the hearing.

No word from any Ray. While writing this I heard from a friend that advance copies of the Playboy with the first of the JFK pieces have been sent to the press.

Sincerely,