

Journal

Dear Jim, CIA/Domestic Intelligence

1/1/75

It was no special trick to have been able to tell you the day before the news was out that the CIA had probably interfered with my possibilities of publication at exactly the two publishing houses exposed in yesterday's news. Nor to connect Hunt with this because as you know I had made that connection with Wilkinson years ago. However, I do note that these stories for the first time report what I have believed all along had to have been the case, that this proscribed domestic activity had to have begun much earlier than had been indicated in previous reports, which dated it only after the escalation in Southeast Asia.

The Littauer & Wilkinson cover and/or activity is not yet out. After I was there, Wilkinson arranged for the publication of a pro-Warren Commission book by Lucy Freeman, one of the earlier shrink jobs.

How know that the strange chick who was my N.O. informant pinpointed my having been to Praeger when she was in one of her perverse moods. Here is that story, not as she said she knew it, which was through Layton Martens, but as it happened, so you'll know:

The first or the second place I went when Ivan Obolensky (who had just published Farago's Patton, who is the son of OSS man Prince Serge Obolensky and whose manager was a shady Greek who had changed his name to John Leeds) broke the contract the day after Leeds had made a rush trip to Washington and two days after he had been drooling into the till to me over the advance-sale indications of 35,000 was either Bragger or Pocket Books.

A friend who had been a fellow Senate investigator with me was a friend of Mort Funer, who was Praeger's director of special projects. I'd have to go through many pages of notes for a planned book Dick Darin in the Hell-Box; or How I got Rich in Six Months, to get the exact date. However, I have a very clear recollection of the surroundings and the surrounding circumstances and of my conversations with Funer and the approximate time. It could not have been later than March, 1965.

Praeger himself was in San Francisco. Funer was interested in the subject. He read the reconstituted manuscript overnight and was excited. He told me that is Praeger went for it, and the decision would be Praeger's on a subject like this, the first print would be not less than 25,000. Praeger would be back in a day or so. (Obolensky never did return the manuscript and I never did get the "advance.")

I returned to Praeger's office at the appointed time and was told that Praeger would not go for the book for a reason that made no sense: I was not a recognized scholar. He went, as I was told, only for established scholars. Had this been true, it would have been overcome by the projected first-print evaluation for not many books have a first print of that size and the honcho himself had reached this evaluation in Praeger's absence. (Funer was not only a manager who did books on his own- he was also a ghost. As I recall he had just ghosted a Humphrey book.)

This was all before exposure of Praeger as a CIA front.

With McKay my reasons were from the past of the man I saw and that of the man he said he would like to use as a consultant, a friend of his. Rawson owned McKay. His wife was reputed to be the actual brains and manager.

The third excerpt on the inside back cover of the original Whitewash is from the letter of rejection by Howard Cady. He was then editorial chief, I think called managing editor. My recollection, again, is so clear after all these years and all the many offices in which I ~~was~~ then was I can describe McKay's and his personal office.

Cady saw me immediately because he remembered my name, although we had never met. He had been in OSS headquarters and it appears that everyone there remembered my conspicuous success with the first job I did, the one awaiting me when I was cleared for security. It was known as the Paris case. I can tell you more if you want to know. Write a story, especially about the failure of big-named lawyers.

I could not say no when Cady asked if I'd object if he had this trusted friend, Isaac Don Levine, a Maryland farmer and an authentic expert, as Cady saw it, give his estimate of the manuscript. You will not, however, that the rejection is not for editorial reasons nor for alleged commercial ones. It is the rejection of a predicted best-seller.