

4/19/70

Dear Ed,

This is to explain what will bring you up to date (without involving you in anything), the absence of what I said would be enclosed, etc.

It is also in strictest confidence, for reasons I think will be obvious.

Just as I was beginning to do what I wrote I would I got a phone call about an immediate and pressing emergency, a real, honest-to-goodness one. A year ago I quietly undertook the closest thing that comes to mind to a complete impossibility, arranging to establish a relations of as close as his character will allow to trust with James Earl Ray and to provide him with counsel of my choice with his acceptance. I have, without exchanging a word with him, accomplished both. My lawyer in my suit for the suppressed records on him is not his lawyer, in addition to the awful hooks he has, only one of whom has been separated (the President of the American Bondo Association). Ray has been given a copy of what I wrote about him (the same work from which Skolnick stole) and flipped. He got his approval back to me and asked permission to use part in his defense. I agreed subject to certain specified (now also written) specifications, which continue my control over my own work. Meanwhile, with a decent lawyer in on the case, the nut got a bit concerned about the last thing they put inside paper shells, waited until too late, then sent a copy to my Ray's new lawyer for his improving. He had no time to digest 300,000 words of so, for the paper must be filed this coming week, so he phoned me to prepare this for him, and I had to stop and do it. He came up yesterday, we went over it, I gave him subs of tapes (I'm not the world's only blabbermouth) of the principals that are relevant, other proofs where he needed them, a copy of what I have written, with references to the pertinent passages and quotes, and now he has to knowk himself out trying to meet an impossible deadline. I hope he follows my suggestion and wires for a brief extension. The effort is to get Ray not a new trial but the first one, and it is complicated and handicapped by all the endless mistakes of all the previous lawyers, the worst being by the most reputable and competent. If we succeed, which means if my work and book succeed where the legal eagles have failed, there will then be a trial in which this book will again be the central thing. In your experience, can you conceive of better reasons for a book to be "unpublishable"? Anyway, I hope this explains it is more than the disorder of my life from the complexity of my preoccupations, that it is a real thing that interrupted my pursuit of Skolnick.

I have just resumed that, with a phone conversation with the fellow who gave him the materials. In a nutshell, it is only a) what I gave him to work with, b) what he did for me; and c) with written, specified limitations including the strictest injunction against publicity, for reasons I had stated and he repeated. He is to send me this letter, to which there has been no response, as is also the case with a subsequent one caiding him. He read me from the list of what he sent skolnick, which he could lay hands on immediately, and it is as described. In short, my stuff and only mine.

Now, the President of Columbia College dissembled in his letter to me. However, I am not changing the one I haven't mailed and is enclosed. He called Skolnick in Ruesday, gave him hell, and warned him he is never again to involve the name of the college in any of his activities.... And I have drafted a complaint, but I've not had a chance to look at it. Doing in twixt and tween is not the best way and it may take more work. I am not concerned about whether or not it is thrown out because I am not conversant with the technicalities of the law, because it will accomplish the disassociation of S from the "critical community" and pull some teeth.

Sincerely,