

4/8/70, 2 p.m.

Skolnick phoned about 1 or a few minutes later, as I was beginning lunch. The conversation ended about 1:15. He began smoothly and I let him talk. He wanted to know what was bothering me, etc., and after a while I just called him a crook. He was entirely without indignation. He was and remained evasive, playing on words, with the most transparent amateurishness, as in protesting his high regard for my work, having praised it on the air (as though this had meaning), and then saying he had not ever read any of my "manuscripts". He kept referring to "manuscript", which is the most obvious evasion, and a conscious reflection of his awareness of my knowledge, I'd take it. Russ did not give him the manuscript, just the documents. He always switched when it got uncomfortable, as it soon did when I started going after him. He first pretended, for example, he did not know Gall, then that he didn't know Trunzo (he never admitted he did), pretended, without so saying, that he had gotten a student to get the documents from the Archives, tried putting all kinds of words in my mouth, thoughts in my mind. I repeatedly told him to stop playing games, that I had no interest in any such conversation. I pointed out some, but he was unchanging. What else could he do? When he saw he was getting nowhere he accused me of being mercenary, of anger because his independent, allegedly, discovery of what I had written would cost me a large amount of money I allegedly visualized, whereas he is a poor man, crippled, thus denied access to the Archives (a fiction I soon punctured, without response from him, when I pointed out he could write letters). It didn't take long for me to get mad, especially when he said he wasn't mad at me! I told him to be under no misapprehension, that is the way I feel about him. He asked why and I told him because he stole from me, because he is a crook. I repeated this word several times and he never once reacted, rather an odd lack of reaction in an honest man (his claim) so wrongly accused. He claimed never to have said he had an appointment to see me, evaded when I quoted Gall and Bud (he gave this a different interpretation than I recall Bud's), still pretended he didn't know or had any dealings with Russ, evaded when I was specific about his conversation with Russ and that he was supposed to call me the next night, etc. He persisted in shifting the subject here and I persisted in not allowing it, challenging him to deny it, which he didn't, merely, blithely, going on to something else. This man has considerable experience in dishonesty or was born with an astounding capacity for evasiveness and glib subject-changing. He made allegations that I had called the news media (the inference if not the words being all of them), reverse, to make charges against him, and asked me why I hadn't phoned him reverse. I told him I felt I had no call to and pointed out his long silence since I was in touch with WRSV. He left this fast, very fast. At first no more time. At this point Stuart Pahn of WCFL called, taped, and I now have to leave. Pahn and I went over what Hagen and I had and more. He seemed reasonable and at the end I suggested we should both think it over, that what could be done to prevent further such irresponsibilities should be done or at least tried, and that his management-legal people should also consider what they think they can do. When he kept asking what would help I finally said making it possible for me to print the book and the most graceful possible withdrawal of the suit, without sensational publicity, which would only hurt more if not avoided.