

mailed 5/22/70

**TIME**  
THE WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE

TIME & LIFE BUILDING  
ROCKEFELLER CENTER  
NEW YORK 10020

MARIA LUISA CISNEROS  
EDITORIAL OFFICES

Dear TIME Reader:

Thank you very much for your letter to TIME. It was referred to the appropriate editors who were interested to have your views. We are very sorry, however, that we were not able to publish it.

Sincerely,



Maria Luisa Cisneros

MLC/mo

April 19, 1970

Mr. Henry Anatole Grunwald  
Managing Editor, TIME  
Rockefeller Center  
New York, New York 10020

Dear Mr. Grunwald:

Skolnick, says TIME (April 20), "is not a man to be taken lightly."

Correct. No man as unabashed in open thievery, who, after being caught in his crookedness, has the gall to file a spurious lawsuit blending a sick ego, a misbegotten Messianic self-concept and the wildest nightmares with that theft, is ever to be "taken lightly".

All that is not the most irresponsible invention is openly stolen from my book COUP D'ETAT. Those documents appended to this unparalleled, incompetent legal monstrosity dignified by TIME as a "suit" were obtained by subterfuge from a man helping me. So careless was this @courtroom gadfly" he didn't even try and duplicate them. He used the stolen copies, which bear unique added markings. And rather than the Archives "suppressing" this material, that is where I got it, long ago/ Skolnick's is a new definition of "suppression". He never asked for any of it. (Ask Marion Johnson, the man you quote, 963-4092).

Aside from indulging his limitless ego, what Skolnick has accomplished by this indescribable legal incompetence, which has no standing, meets none of the requirements of the law and is permeated by the grossest error, is to destroy any prospect of carrying forward the legitimate investigation. When, inevitably, he is tossed out of court (posing as a martyr), the headlines thus contrived will delight the government: "No JFK Suppression" or "Warren Commission Validated", both of which will be false.

The real suppressions will continue, then buried deeper. The legitimate suits will continue to be ignored, public and media minds subverted by this ploy, and the responsible people filing them will be further defamed.

Which is how you began your scribbling.

Don't you do the most rudimentary checking? Example:

Rather than "Klein's Sporting Goods Co. of Chicago having no receipt for the gun allegedly sent Oswald", it was found and in Washington before the next day dawned, is central to the official fiction, was widely reproduced in facsimile, including on page 120 of the Report itself!

You talk of "that conspiratorial army of would-be historians"?

Yours truly,

cc: Hugh Sidey

Harold Weisberg

P.S. If you doubt the truth of any of the above, Come see me. I've got the "suit", the originals, letters, tapes and a full statement from the man deceived.

## THE KENNEDYS End of the Affair

As untidily and unsatisfactorily as it began, the legal inquiry into the incident at Chappaquiddick came to an abrupt end last week. After a few hours of fruitless probing, a grand jury appointed to investigate the death last July of Mary Jo Kopechne adjourned in frustration without clarifying any of the mystery that still surrounds her death.

The grand jury, sitting in Edgartown, Mass., began its work with high hopes. Foreman Leslie Leland, a Vineyard Haven druggist, pledged a complete and independent investigation; many jurors were apparently in an indicting mood. Their ambitions were quickly dashed by State Superior Court Justice Wilfred Paquet, 67, a no-nonsense jurist with a reputation for running a tight courtroom. Somewhat Churchillian of mien and manner, Paquet swore the jurors to secrecy, warning them that their lips were "sealed not for a month, not for a year, but forever." He also narrowed the scope of their investigation by informing them that they could consider only those matters brought to their attention by the superior court, the district attorney or their own personal knowledge.

Paquet's charge left the grand jury with few options. Only three charges were possible against Senator Edward Kennedy: manslaughter, perjury or "driving to endanger," a traffic offense that is generally combined with other charges, notably drunken driving. Citing a ruling by the state's Supreme Judicial Court, the judge denied the jurors' request for a look at the transcript of the January inquest into the accident. District Attorney Edmund Dinis, who had access to both the transcript and the report on the proceedings by Presiding Justice James Boyle, told the jurors there was not enough evidence to indict Kennedy on any of the charges. The jurors themselves made no move to call anyone involved in the events surrounding the accident; four new witnesses, who testified for less than 20 minutes in all, provided nothing useful in the way of evidence.

**Case Closed.** With that, the grand jury gave up. Accompanied by a sheriff in formal dress, the ten men and ten women assembled glumly before Judge Paquet in Martha's Vineyard's 112-year-old courthouse. The judge asked Foreman Leland if the jury had any presentments to make. "I have nothing to present," said Leland quietly. "Not you," snapped Paquet. "Does the grand jury have anything to present?" Startled, Leland said that the answer for the grand jury was the same. His reply came as a relief to Dinis, who has become an increasingly reluctant participant in the drama involving Massachusetts' most powerful political family. "The case is closed," he said.

The doubts remain. Several grand ju-



JUSTICE PAQUET  
*The jury had nothing to present.*

rors believed that Kennedy should have been brought before a court to answer for events that they still find inadequately explained. Many were disappointed at their inability to return an indictment against him. "Most of us felt Kennedy was morally responsible for the death of that girl," said one woman juror, ignoring Paquet's warning about sealed lips. Said a male juror: "I don't believe this will ever be resolved as far as some people are concerned."

The case is resolved, however, as far



SHERMAN SKOLNICK  
*Only the archives can tell.*

as the courts are concerned. Dinis' statement that no further action is planned clears the way for the release of the inquest transcript and Justice Boyle's report. All that stood in the way of the release was resolution of the kind of dispute that typifies courthouse politics in Massachusetts. Freelance Court Stenographer Sidney Lipman, following a well-established Bay State practice, made arrangements to offer the 764-page transcript for sale at \$1.05 a page, or \$802.20 a copy. He has sued to halt its publication by the court at the bargain-basement price of \$75 a copy. Rejecting his suit, the state has gone ahead with its plans to release the inquest documents this week. Few expect the transcript to produce any surprises or further clues to what really happened at and after the tragic party for the boiler-room girls.

### Another Death Plot?

That conspiratorial army of would-be historians who specialize in the assassination of John Kennedy may have a brand-new plot to play with. In Chicago last week, Legal Researcher Sherman H. Skolnick filed suit in federal district court against the National Archives and Records Service to release certain documents. He contended that the archives had unlawfully squirreled away the details of a hitherto unknown plot or plots to kill J.F.K. at the Nov. 2, 1963, Army-Air Force game in Chicago, 20 days before his assassination by Lee Harvey Oswald.

Quixotic as his quest may sound, Skolnick, who is a paraplegic, is not a man to be taken lightly. He is a well-known courtroom gadfly with a penchant for legal battles, and he played a key role in getting two Illinois Supreme Court judges to resign amid charges of conflict of interest brought by him (TIME, Aug. 29). Thus it was not surprising that people with information about the alleged plot sought him out to help make their case; among the informants is a former Secret Service agent.

As Skolnick tells it, the Chicago assassination plot involved a supposed accomplice of Oswald's by the name of Thomas Arthur Vallee and three or four other men whose identities are uncertain. Their plan to kill the President had to be abandoned when Vallee, a lithographer, was picked up by Chicago police on a minor traffic violation on the day of the game. After spotting a hunting knife on the front seat of his car, the cops looked further and found a rifle. Vallee was put on probation for concealing a weapon; for the traffic violation he drew a \$5 fine, which was suspended. He has since disappeared, as has the photograph that should be attached to his arrest card.

Skolnick firmly believes that Oswald was somehow involved in Vallee's alleged plot. In an effort to prove it, he wants to see certain documents that the Warren Commission considered in

making its report and then turned over to the archives, where they are to be kept secret for 75 years. Skolnick argues that the archives can prove that the 1962 Ford Falcon driven by Vallee was—as he believes—linked to Oswald in some way or even registered in his name. Skolnick also maintains that the archives have Government documents showing that Klein's Sporting Goods Co. of Chicago had no receipt for the gun allegedly sent to Oswald—an allegation that raises the possibility that the weapon actually came from some other source.

The Justice Department, however, has responded to Skolnick's suit with a "No comment," and National Archivist Marion Johnson claims that he has "seen no evidence in the records connecting Vallee to an assassination attempt." The Government has 60 days in which to answer the suit.

ees but have the power to halt the railroads. Last week, as the end of the moratorium approached and no agreement had been reached between railroad management and the workers, Congress reluctantly turned to an unusual solution. By legislative action, it imposed what would be the terms of the unions' next two-year contract—an action that some labor experts thought might face a constitutional challenge. The terms, which provided a 68¢-an-hour wage increase for 48,000 shop-craft workers who now make \$3.60 an hour, were the same as the ones that the railroads and negotiators for four rail unions had agreed upon last December. At that time, the rank and file of the sheet-metal workers, the smallest of four rail unions, balked, principally because of an anti-featherbedding clause that would have allowed other rail employees to perform "incidental work"

"wisp of smoke" and threatened another one if Washington did not increase the ante. The Administration may have trouble enough just paying for the current raise, which will cost \$2.5 billion a year. Congress has made it clear that it will not pick up the President's suggestion that first-class postage rates be raised from 6¢ to 10¢.

Almost lost in the maneuvering on the postal-pay question was the latest flurry of congressional action on Nixon's once-vaunted plan to modernize the mail system by making it a non-political, Government-owned corporation. Several junior members of the House Post Office and Civil Service Committee made a last-gasp effort on behalf of the concept by pushing through a bill embodying the original Nixon proposals. Politically, however, the bill was dead on arrival. Many powerful Congressmen have been opposed all along to corporate reform of the postal system, and they have the votes to defeat any such measure.

**Second Installment.** The White House has now placed its hope for postal reform on a more modest Senate bill sponsored by Wyoming's McGee and Hawaii Republican Hiram Fong. The McGee-Fong bill, among other things, would retain a Senate-approved Postmaster General but would give Congress' cherished power of setting postal rates to a new, semi-autonomous board of commissioners. Though the slowly progressing bill is now in its eleventh version, Congress will be under strong pressure to pass some legislation before long. Almost certain to be attached to it is another 8% postal pay increase, which is the second installment of the Administration's agreement with the postal unions.

## AGENCIES

### Up Against the Wall, FDA!

Nader's Raiders struck again last week. This time their target was the Federal Food and Drug Administration, which they tore apart in what may well be the most devastating critique of a U.S. Government agency ever issued.

The attack took the form of a 293-page report called *The Chemical Feast*. It was based on a two-year study of the FDA by Consumer Watchdog Ralph Nader and 20 student volunteers, most of them specialists in medicine and law. Their report accused the agency of conspiring with the food industry to defraud consumers and even to endanger their health; FDA regulations, they argued, read like a catalogue of favors to special interests. Specifically, the agency was accused of allowing the sale of "enriched white flour" that is actually stripped of most nutrients, of permitting meat packers to increase the fat content at the expense of protein content in frankfurters and other foods, of letting major manufacturers saturate supermarkets with such heavily advertised "unfoods" as "near-zero nutrition



UNION LEADER GUS JOHNSON ADDRESSING NEW YORK LETTER CARRIERS  
*A potentially expensive wisp of smoke.*

## LABOR

### Staving Off the Strikes

The dilatory 91st Congress stands a good chance of surpassing Harry Truman's "do nothing" 80th as a model of legislative nonactivity. Faced with the possibility of several nation-crippling strikes, however, both House and Senate last week proved that they could overcome inertia and act with dispatch. While an illegal strike by "sick" air controllers entered its third week and wild-catting Teamsters threatened chaos on the highways, Congress moved quickly to head off further trouble with the railroad and postal unions.

What forced action on the railroad crisis was the end of the 37-day moratorium that Congress had approved in March to block a strike threat by 6,000 intransigent sheet-metal workers—who constitute only 1% of all rail employ-

in areas normally assigned to the metal workers. That provision remains in the terms imposed by Congress. Though sheet-metal men expressed displeasure, the expectations are that the new contract will stick.

**Dead on Arrival.** On the postal front, Congress also moved quickly to make good on the promises that the Administration had made to end the illegal eight-day postal strike. Both the House and the Senate overwhelmingly passed legislation, which President Nixon is expected to sign this week, providing a 6% pay increase for 5,300,000 federal employees. The increase would include the nation's 725,000 postal workers, who stand to get annual pay hikes ranging from \$371 to \$507 a year. Even that did not please everyone. Gustave Johnson, leader of the letter carriers' Manhattan Branch 36, which began last month's strike, called the settlement a

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Dear Mr. Sidey,

I write you not seeking TIME-LIFE space but because I still believe you meant every word about which I first wrote you, were genuine in expressing a deep concern in referring to "this gang" in government, and in the hope this latest melding of irresponsibility and blunder by the vast corporation of which you are an important part will dismay you a fraction as much as it does me.

When a legitimate suit in which the Deputy Attorney General brands himself a liar is filed because of the unheard of confiscation and suppression of court records, TIME-LIFE had no interest. Remember, I phoned you personally. Yet you talk of "this gang" and TIME defies a wretched scoundrel who is their running dog? You never looked at the suit or its attached documentation, part of which is Kleindienst's own letters to me.

I become part of "That conspiratorial army of would-be historians"? But you people write true history?

And shameless crooks become part of the true history?

I tell you in all seriousness, this legal fakery by Skolnick is entirely beyond adequate description. It is the wildest, sick imagining presented as gospel. He saw the chance for more publicity, as vital to him as breath to you, and started working on it two months ago laying court (with my material) first to CBS's WBEM, then involved his college and his class on small-time WRSV (which pretends it has no tape when that show was taped in advance), wound up with WCBL, which ~~was~~ worked with him for two weeks, doing less checking than even TIME, and got him on the UPI wire.

The law allegedly invoked prescribes certain steps, and properly does this. Each agency, again properly, has added regulations. Otherwise nuts could drive the government crazy. Not only did Skolnick do none of this, Johnson is my source for the fact that he never once asked the Archives for a single thing! The only legitimate paper attached to that infamous device for getting himself publicity not stolen from me was given him by my lawyer who never dreamed he'd make such insane use of it. This is the record of the phone call, also not suppressed.

However, what may be defamatory is withheld, and here you can check Skolnick and me simultaneously. To protect the man who made the inquiry for me, because he wants anonymity, I put his identification out of the copy I sent the friend helping me and imposed upon by Skolnick. Get that from Skolnick and compare that with what is in my files. Of course, you can also do this with all the documents.

So, you continue with that noble piety, TIME-LIFE with mixed holiness and infallibility. And I'll continue, wearier at the endless abdication of the so-called responsible writers and the so-called responsible press, anxiously awaiting your next wrist-slapping of this "gang". Sincerely, Harold Weisberg