

5/8/70

Dear Russ,

If your phone was disconnected because you couldn't pay the bill, I am sorry. I tried to call you.

While my immediate purpose was to let you know that I have filed against Skolnick by mail, I had other purposes, including some immediate suggestions for RISC.

It was a handicap if not a serious liability, having to file without access to what you promised for so long to get to me and didn't. It remains thus. You surprise and disappoint me. This is entirely unlike you and it leaves me with the wonder if there is something embarrassing to you that you have not told me. If this is the case, please delay no longer. As I once told you, spilled milk is for cats. People have to clean it up. And the guy who spills it shouldn't hide all the mops.

There remains a great liability in this utter irresponsibility by Skolnick. Everyone who knows anything about the field who has seen or heard passages from it is incredulous and concerned about its potential hurt. The one lawyer who has seen it and does not see the subject fairly well says it is by far the worst thing he has ever seen, it is just bad. And the bastard doesn't stop. The warnings meant nothing to him, not when I wrote WFSV, not when he caught hell from the college, not when WOFL got him worried. I had a report several nights ago from LA saying the stations there have been airing him by phone. Getting on the LA wire with WOFL authentication (which is what got him the LA wire) made most news directors think he was responsible, knew what he was talking about, etc. This hurts us in all those and many other areas we are getting this kind of play (another is Boston), and it further undermines our credibility. One of my new sources, one I'd worked long and hard to open, as I'll explain when you are here, has dried up, and this is of the most serious consequences. To top that all off, as though something as bad as this needs topping, my own suit can be heard any day now. The extension sought by the government expired two days ago. It is luck from now on when it is heard. Under the law it is supposed to be immediately, but I assume the government has the capacity and the disposition to work behind the scenes to effect further delays. These will not be helpful if they get a good press on their response to him.

An enormous amount of my time, beginning in the summer of 1966, has been wasted cleaning up unnecessary messes. Some I couldn't, some I could do only a little with. But each of the many, all unnecessary, all because of irresponsibility, have been cistly as hell to me and all have interfered with two things above all: our credibility and constructive accomplishment in the work. Unfortunately, some have been caused by people with good intentions. At this particular time such things have a more adverse effect on me because of the state of my nerves and health. I regret very much that, having made the mistake, you have not done what you could to relieve it to the degree possible, thus adding still more worry when my nerves are in bad enough shape. By mail or by coming, will you please, immediately, let me have everything? Or would you now rather have me taken by surprise with what you have withheld, either in court or, if I can arrange it (and because it is necessary, I am still trying) in a TV confrontation? You know, with the state of my health, that is the last thing I need, but now it must be done.

The timing on this couldn't be worse, and every day makes it more so. I am now at the stage where I should be filing another suit, and that takes much time. This is an important one (I think they all are--I mean more important) and I have neither the time nor the requisite peace of mind, power to concentrate, that it needs. I've had to take time off to prepare things for the Ray defense. I've just finished with another intrusion, an analysis of a rather large file on it. With each of these things have that declines that must be met, the constructive work get that much more delayed, and I now have the most significant material yet. Need I tell you how disturbing this is?

Now another, and a very heavy burden is about to fall on me. The lawyers have been bastards in our old suit against the government for the damage done us by helicopters I have just received a notice from the clerk of that court telling me that if nothing is done within 30 days, it will be thrown out. So, I have to be my own lawyer in this case where, with a good one, there is the possibility of a very large judgement. This will do to Lil what you cannot begin to imagine, having never seen what it has already done. The emotional stress is enormous. Once, in the clinic, her reaction was such the neurologist thought she had a stroke. So, I have to avoid giving her even the typing to do. Today I'll have to write to judge and ask him to permit me to be my own lawyer, etc.

Without knowing these things you know enough of our problems. Because I do not believe you are the kind of man who would consciously add to them, I find myself perplexed at your silence, and your failure to keep your word, indeed, at your failure to volunteer once you knew what happened. Is it not past time for your straightening out what can be?

It is not my purpose to make you feel easier. In the time this needless Skolnick mess has already taken, I could have written most of another book.

Sincerely,