

September 29, 1974

Mr. Jason Epstein
Editor, Random House
210 East 50th St.
New York, New York

Dear Mr. Epstein:

When I was in New York City last month, you were kind enough to squeeze me in for a few moments. You then said you would like to see my Watergate book, "The Unimpeachment of Richard Nixon," as soon as it is completed. This is to explain my silence.

Under exceptional circumstances and while in litigation over it, I received a TOP SECRET Warren Commission document I had been trying to obtain for about eight years. In and of itself it is of historic importance from its content and as a self-disclosure of how the most eminent in government work when they presume permanent secrecy. However, it can be misused to justify Nixon's gestapo-like acts and in the defenses of those once closest to him. I therefore felt I had to rush this out under conditions that would minimize the possibilities of this perversion. While there have been mechanical delays, that book is now in manufacture as another in my "underground" WHITE-WASH series. I have no idea how I will distribute it, but it will be available to frustrate another possible obstruction of justice. It is also, I think, a remarkable exposure of the CIA by its former head, Dulles.

I am also James Earl Ray's unpaid investigator. My little known book FRAME-UP, and my subsequent investigations are the basis for an order by the sixth circuit court of appeals, affirmed by the Supreme Court, that he be given an evidentiary hearing. He is accused of having assassinated Martin Luther King, Jr., and is in jail for 99 years, about three of which have been spent in solitary, but he has never had a trial. This hearing, scheduled for a little more than three weeks from now, is to determine whether he will receive a trial.

The state and federal governments are breaking their backs to prevent this, requiring much time of the entirely volunteer defense. Much of the time since we met has been taken up by coping with an endless series of obfuscations and delays despite favorable orders by a federal court. Tonight I leave on a trip to examine the evidence this court ordered be made available. The state has appealed this order and the trip may be a further waste of time, but I must make the effort.

I have this confidence in my work and that of the young lawyer who began his part before he took his bar exams: we will, without more corruption, overturn both federal and state governments, the FBI and the famous criminal lawyer, Percy Foreman, who salted Ray away. We may yet force the government to establish who really did assassinate Dr. King.

But the time and effort it requires at unpredictable moments, each to meet a new emergency, a new obstruction of justice, has been a serious intrusion into my work on the Watergate book. I have been working away at it and, except for the conclusion, it is in unread rough draft. I must tell you honestly, I fear very rough.

However, I am also proud that none of it requires any changes except for editorial reasons. None of the exposures during or since the writing require any changes in factual content. With all that has happened, it is still new. It is a book with significant content that has not been in the papers. It does say how Nixon remained unimpeached; what he had to hide, largely still unknown (including his and Ford's earlier connections with Watergate figures); what the official investigations hid, especially about the real CIA involvements; why he had to bribe Hunt and why Hunt could get away with blackmailing him where others couldn't; and what I believe was my interest Gore Vidal, Bill Buckley's role in protecting Hunt, under whom Buckley served in CIA, including what Buckley suppressed.

It is a very tough book, another of the reasons for this letter. Perhaps it is too tough for acceptability.

It has as a central theme and I think proves beyond question that in times of great political crisis, all the protections of society fail with increasing authoritarianism one of the consequences.

I ask that you keep this confidential: Great as was the Washington Post's reporting, it was not "investigative," it was made possible by the CIA through a domestic operation I have exposed completely enough to stand up in court where I do expect to take the CIA, and in return for this favor the Post protected this CIA front. The man who ran it was immunized by both the Post and the prosecution despite the fact that, while running a CIA front, he was a central operative in a whole series of Colson Watergates. He was even one of Hunt's contacts with Washington when Hunt disappeared so the whole cover could be built. I have this traced in unpublished official documents. I was led to this in self-defense, because I have been the object of improper CIA interest. They a special, different front for other illegal domestic operations. It works through private agencies from one of which I have carbons of surveillance on me, bills rendered, checks in payment, even envelopes in which the checks were mailed. Because this second front has no Watergate relevance, it is not included in this book. It is what made me sensitive to the relevant front. That one, Nixon, Hunt and others involved in the Watergate have a common past, from before Nixon's presidency.

So I wonder if this kind of book is too tough in an era in which the people are regarded as children who have to be protected from the knowledge without which in my view no form of representative society can exist and it and authentic freedom become illusions.

I am also an adversary writer in an old tradition that has grown less popular. I seek to defend justice and decency, not Ray the person, for example.

As best I can I will be reading and editing this draft, beginning as soon as I can when I return from this trip. That will be interrupted by the hearing, after which I will resume it. This means there will be more delay before it can be retyped.

