

June 9, 1975

Dear Jim,

Thanks for your letter of the 4th. I have gone through my files to see what I have relating to the remaining withheld executive session transcripts. I am not at all convinced that a suit would be a good idea. I'll give ~~xxx~~ you all the relevant information I have, along with my reasons.

(1) 1/21/64 session, p. 63-73.

According to the agenda (#48X.1), this is "G. Conference with CIA - decision as to disclosure of materials to CIA for purposes discussed at meeting of January 14, 1964." We have a ~~2x~~ 3-page memo from Willens to Rankin discussing that meeting (1/15/64, R73-I.M.2 - released in 1973.) The meeting appears to have covered a number of interesting but non-sensational matters. The agenda item may refer primarily to the question of having the CIA make some Commission material available to some outside consultants. One of the other matters ~~x~~ raised was making stuff like FBI reports available to the CIA, especially in the foreign ~~x~~ area. I expect that the remaining part of the executive session transcript won't add very much to what we already know about the CIA's relationship with the WC. Of course, there might be a few juicy comments. (A Rankin-Willens letter of Jan. 27, also released in 1973, indicates only that the staff was reviewing the material about Oswald's stay in Russia and hoped to meet with the CIA again.)

(2) June 23, 1964 session. (13 pp., according to Archives letter of 7/31/74)

I have no records showing what this was about. Since it is a CIA matter, I would guess that it had to do with getting information from ~~xxxxxxxx~~ Nosenko - specifically, deciding whether he should be a witness. We now have a memo of June 24, drafted that date by Slawson, which says that "The Commission has asked us to prepare a short memorandum outlining in what respects the information obtained from Nosenko confirms or contradicts information we have from other sources." (#K.13) Since this meeting was so short, I would expect that it consisted of a discussion of the ~~xxxx~~ Nosenko problem, culminating in a decision to ask Slawson for a memo.

In both cases (1) and (2), their trick of downgrading the classification to Confidential and using the CIA's authority would seem to moot the argument that these ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ transcripts were classified routinely and too heavily. There may be material here which I doubt that any court would say should not be classified Confidential.

(3) May 19, 1964 session. (52 pp., per same Archives letter as (2))

Campbell says this is "limited to a discussion of the background of Commission personnel." According to a letter from Rankin to Rep. Rogers (6/24, #442.9), at this meeting each employee was considered on an individual basis. The juicy stuff, if any, would be on Redlich. Rep. Devine wrote on Aug. 28 (#TC.53) that he was led to believe that Ford moved to dismiss Redlich but was overruled. This transcript might be interesting to read but I would be surprised if you could convince anyone that it is not just the sort of thing which was supposed to be ~~xxxx~~ exempt under exemption 6.

P.S. on (2): There might also be some interesting general discussion at this short meeting, since the next day Willens issues a press release denying as "unfounded" published reports that the WR would be published within the next few days. I think this is when the single-bullet theory leaked out.

In summary, we cannot count on these transcripts giving us anything which is both new and interesting. We do not know enough about what they contain to make our argument on the basis of related facts already known to us. I think the legal case is less ~~xxxx~~ than compelling. There are a number of other withheld documents which I think are more deserving of our attention. (E.g., the Mexico City photo stuff, or the FBI's files on Oswald (on which I am still exhausting administrative remedies.)) Also, from a personal point of view, there are possible disadvantages to my ~~going~~ going to court on a relatively weak suit; also, I would want to be careful not to be associated with statements about this material by Harold with which I probably would disagree, at least in tone. So, if you go ahead, I would ~~xxxx~~ prefer to stay formally off and just help with background information. Let me know if you

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want copies of any of the documents I have mentioned, or if you still think it would be best to go ahead with a suit with my name on it.

I might be too ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ pessimistic about what is in these transcripts; there may well be some real goodies. But I guess there is a question of your resources involved here, and I'm just suggesting that these are relatively unpromising documents.

I wish I had more time to catch up on developments with you, but I hope I can get this in the mail before President Gerry comes on the air with the CIA report.

Best, *Paul*  
PLH