

March 3, 1969

Mr. John N. Mitchell  
Attorney General of the United States  
Department of Justice  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Mitchell,

Before your predecessors left office, I had been led to believe by his appropriate assistant that I could expect meaningful response to inquiries I had addressed to him about Warren-Commission material improperly withheld by order of the department you now head. It has not happened. I write you hoping that with a new administration, one without political responsibility for the errors of the past, I might expect something better.

I asked for certain, specific withheld material. I was told a review was then under way, would soon be completed, and I would hear further. I have not. In fairness to you and your assistants, I want you to know that in one case I know what is in what is withheld and am certain it was suppressed without possibility of cause, save to prevent embarrassment to the government.

Intending to be neither provocative nor offensive, may I ask you to consider if you, too, will not, in effect, be captive of those who have controlled the past and its error, who have a very strong interest in what you know or get to know, what you believe? From whom else can or will you get information? The operating personnel of your department remain unchanged. Those who provided the information used as the basis for the wrong decisions that remain will, perforce, be the same experts on whom you will have to draw. Those who accepted the word of others on faith, no doubt believing they safely could, are still persuaded by the error given them as fact.

May I further suggest that as one of his last acts, the man who preceded you has so radically changed the situation, without it being thought out and understood, you need not be deeply concerned over whether acknowledgement of error is an automatic indictment of the party that provided five of the seven members of the Commission. It is now possible to address one aspect of the situation, without regard to the membership of the Commission, and to reach a positive determination of basic fact. I can help you and, if you so desire, am anxious to. I would like to believe that the first administration not the beneficiary of the assassination would also be the one to seek to justify the re-establishment of faith in their government lost, I think properly, to so many citizens entirely unsatisfied by what their government has told them.

Based on the record of the past, I presume you will be assured that fact is not on the side of which I am part, that we are nuts, self-seekers or just sincere but wrong. However, I am convinced I know what your advisers do not, that I have invested time and study equalled by no other, in or out of the government, and have thereby learned what others do not know. Therefore, if this is what you are told, I ask you to pick several of what you regard as the key

C  
O  
P  
Y

questions of fact and let me confront them on these in your presence. In a few minutes on any vital one, I am certain you will recognize at least a reasonable doubt, a lack of certainty that cannot be tolerated when the subject is the murder of a President and the uncertainty need not exist. I do believe on thorough inquiry, which you are not likely to get from your subordinates, you will conclude I have given you a very considerable understatement.

It seems to me that if you do this, you will, aside from benefitting the national honor, do much to build faith and confidence in the new administration of which you are so important a part.

You may have received a briefing from the numerous U.S. Attorneys in attendance at the recent New Orleans trial. Probably your department now has the transcripts of this trial. If you were to be aware of what I can point out to you in these transcripts, I believe you will have initiated actions on your own, prior to receipt of this letter.

Again, because I do not want to be in the position of seeming to slip up on your blind side, I want you to know that I have no doubt at all that anything more than the most perfunctory inquiry is going to confront you with the question of perjury. I have no doubt at all it was committed.

My purpose in writing is to ask of my government what it has improperly denied me. It is also to offer you whatever help you will accept in what may very well become a major problem for you and your administration if you do not seek and use outside help. You begin without responsibility in this awful thing that has happened. The longer you stay in office, the less this will be true, for on the assumption of office you also assumed certain responsibilities, as did the administration of which you are part.

My offer is sincere, as you can readily learn for yourself. And believe me, there are few authentic experts on this subject.

Respectfully yours,

Harold Weisberg

C  
O  
P  
Y