

Rt. 12, Frederick, Md. 21701

12/14/77

301/473-8186

Dear reporter friend,

The amended Freedom of Information Act provides for the remission of all fees and costs under certain conditions. One of these conditions is that the nation's interest be served. Perhaps part of the same provision, perhaps a separate one is the making available of the information to others, particularly through the press.

The government has been stalling for months on my requests for a decision on the remission of costs. It continued not to decide even when directed to by the judge in that case. It now has a deadline for decision. If the decision is favorable in this case the same problem will exist in other cases. In FOIA requests of the past I have already paid extensive fees that might be recovered and devoted to new FOIA efforts.

My work and interests are not limited directly to the political assassinations. This form letter is prompted by a conversation last night with one who will be examining several thousand formerly secret pages of records that I have obtained on a subject of special interest to him, in his work. That friend offered to supply an affidavit for use in recovering fees and having others waived. So I have decided to ask others for the same help so that when Jim Lesar needs it he can have the support.

The avoidance of a number of letters is not the only reason I am using copies. Other reasons range from keeping the rights and interests of all separated, such as that of the friend in the paragraph above, to preserving complete freedom for those few of whom I am making this request.

What each of you can say that can be helpful does vary, although I believe you can all state that over a period of time I have provided information in the form of both records and what I have learned from these records, that I have received no pay for these services and have asked none, and that I have always taken what time you asked, in person, by phone and for hours at a time at my home/office. Some of you have knowledge of my having provided the same kind of assistance to other reporters. Of these some not immediately available to me have either discussed my help with you or provided you copies of records I provided them or both.

Several of you know that as soon as I obtained some important records under FOIA I made copies generally available, not even reserving first use for myself. At least one of you may recall that I held a press conference in New York City at which I gave to those attending copies of a significant and formerly Top Secret Warren Commission executive session transcript as well as copies of those records I have obtained relating to the FBI's scientific tests in the JFK assassination. This was seven months prior to my use of these records in Post Mortem. At least one of you received what he wanted of what I gave away from his paper's New York correspondent.

I think all of you can report that I have not sought personal attention and have often avoided it. In this I intend to address what may or may not be required by judges but should have meaning to them - that to your knowledge my work is not for profit. One can state that I refused prime attention at a time I had a book about to appear because I visualized a possible conflict of interest and that I then so specified.

In this I am trying to remind each of what each may recall, not what I am asking all to say. I am asking of each only what each recalls and is willing to state for inclusion in a court record. Some of you cannot state that I have used the records I have obtained to help them in their own inquiries while more than one of you can say that I have provided records and guidance, even participated in your own further inquiries. One may recall the filing of an FOIA request that duplicated earlier ones of mine only in part - and that when I obtained what I did I furnished copies of all I'd received without even being asked.

2

Some of you have used both my records obtained under FOIA and my knowledge as a result of study of them to check the accuracy of other sources so that the information presented to the public might be as accurate as possible.

If you have any questions perhaps Jim Lesar can respond better than I. He is overloaded in court cases right now. He will know of this letter by a carbon.

Some of you may not know the arrangements I have made for 10% of my records, including all obtained by FOIA and PA. They are to be deposited in the University of Wisconsin system through the Stevens Point branch where supervision will be by Prof. David Wrone, the outstanding bibliographer in the field. He also is one who has avoided the general irresponsibility on the subject of political assassinations. Jim Lesar and Howard Roffman are to be the executors of my estate, including all records.

About nine file drawers of my earlier work have already been transferred there. Most of my photographs have already been duplicated there and are available. While I cannot now predict the final extent of my records right now they fill some 20 file cabinets. When the deposit is completed the only restriction is to be the preservation of the rights of others. I have waived my own rights of privacy believing this essential to subsequent independent assessment of my work.

The amended act also provides for courts to award counsel fees to lawyers who have handled successful FOIA cases. I have been without financial support in these efforts of which some of you have had personal knowledge for a decade or more. Thus I have not been able to pay Jim Lesar for his extensive services. Between these and other cases he has handled without fee he has not been able to make a living from the practice of law. You may not all know that the order to him of the sixth circuit court of appeals to continue representing James Earl Ray without fee was not the beginning of that unpaid work. The thousands of unpaid hours he put into this are beyond calculation. We have worked virtually around the clock for many years in such efforts the results of which are and have been available to you. Some of you have been present at court proceedings in which this work was made public domain in both the JFK and King assassinations. Some of you know from having seen and had copies of some or all of these records. My estimate of the volume of records Jim has created in addition to court transcripts and limited to what is available in public depositories is that without covers or file folders it bulks at well over a solid foot of paper. So I am anxious for him to be filing the proper request for fees that are, by the way, quite nominal. He may be able to use the statements for which I am asking in such efforts. If any of you can think of what can help toward that end I would appreciate the inclusion of it.

He may have been to file these statements in the immediate future. I would appreciate whatever you feel you are able to provide as soon as it is convenient for you.

Thanks you all,



Harold Weisberg