Mr. William Safire
New York Times
229 W. 43 St.,
New York, N.Y. 10036

7/16/86

Dear Mr. Safire,

After reading that you were "incensed" over the campaign to "get" a man who was not in physical condition to defend himself, Roy Cohn, I regret very much that you incense selectively and did not when, after you'd written a fine column defending FOIA, I informed you of the situation I am in because the government is trying to "get" me and the Act with absolutely nothing except entirely undenied perjury, fraud and misrepresentation. And by "absolutely nothing" I mean without even pro forma denial before two federal courts. The records of both hold the irrefutable documentary proof disclosed by the government itself to another requester, from whom I obtained it.

I do not mean that you are alone in this indifference to both the threat against, and the Act intended to let the people know what their government does. At what for me was considerable expense because my only income is a little more than $350 monthly from Social Security, and considerable difficulty, because I am 73 and severely limited by serious illnesses following arterial surgery, I kept many in all the media informed with xeroxes of what was presented to the court by both sides. To your Washington bureau, many of whose staffers of the past I spent days on end helping, undenied official perjury, fraud and misrepresentation, proven and ignored in and by the courts, is not, I was told, news. The news standards of my reporting of years ago were closer to our once-great tradition.

Also not newsworthy is the fact that after lying under oath to allege it did not exist the FBI disclosed that, among other similar practises, it prepared "dossiers" on a chief justice, a Senator, a Congressman, the House Minority Leader, later unelected President, an eminence of the world of finance and the former Director, Central Intelligence. It prepared dossiers on their staff twice, once in that Commission's formative days and again when the FBI objected to the mild and understated criticisms of it in that Report. Those of us who criticized the FBI and the Commission? It prepared "sex dossiers" on us. (And distributed them.)

It likewise was not news when this "new evidence" I filed quotes an assistant FBI director as saying of its supposed investigation of that most subversive of crimes, the assassination of a President, that it just stood around "with its pockets open hoping that evidence would fall in," quoted from memory because it is that difficult for me to search files now.

Aside from the evil precedent entirely unreported by those who claim to love free information, can you imagine how I feel when, ~~without counsel and~~ further enfeebled by new circulatory complications following surgery earlier this year and without counsel (a conflict of interest having been entirely fabricated) I must try to defend myself and the Act before courts that have not only ignored serious and I suggest subversive felonies but have rewarded these official felons? Or, after many long, difficult and to me costly efforts to assure freedom of information (the investigatory files exemption was amended in 1974 over one of my cases) and I'm sure I'm hated more for that), I find that none of those who prate of their love for and dedication to ~~the~~ journalism give a damn? Can a genuinely free press live when it refuses to report serious and I think it is fair to say evil official felonies? Can our kind of freedom survive this kind of official misconduct?

Sincerely,
Harold Weisberg
7627 Old Receiver Road
Frederick, Md. 21701

Harold Weisberg