

Mr. Richard L. Huff, Director
Office of Information and Privacy
Department of Justice
Washington, D.C. 20530

6/10/84

Dear Mr. Huff,

You concluded your letter of the 12th by responding to my question, why your belated activity with some of my long-overdue appeals, explaining that you were catching up on some of those you described as more complex. In responding to you yesterday, I concluded by asking when you would get to others so long overdue that are not complex. One of these ignored and simple rather than complex matters was drawn to my attention earlier today when I had occasion to reread my affidavit of April 20, 1981, filed in C.A. 75-1996. I believe but am not now certain that I provided a copy to your office.

The day after I executed that affidavit and mailed it to my counsel, I suffered a not uncommonly fatal total blockage of circulation on the left side and was rushed to Georgetown hospital for emergency surgery that lasted into the early morning. I was hospitalized for several weeks and thereafter was more limited in what I can do and this affidavit and the matter to which I below refer to were completely forgotten.

The affidavit was requested by the district court, as I now recall it. The FBI and Civil Division~~s~~ have copies, if you do not. I refer to Paragraph 16, on page 5, which I here quote in full: "16. During the 1973 evidentiary hearing I observed a man I later learned was an FBI informer in the same maximum-security cell with James Earl Ray. I knew him as a very identifiable member of the so-called Dixie Mafia. After I learned that Ray's cellmate was an FBI informer, I requested the pertinent and withheld information. This request, too, remains entirely ignored. While I do not expect the FBI to willingly provide additional proof of that violation of Ray's rights, this information is pertinent to the surveillance items of my requests."

My request for this withheld and relevant information was in 1977, when, apparently as the result of a leak from either the FBI or the Department's organized crime component, the informer was identified as both "The Fat Man" and Manfred Baron, who then weighed 330 pounds. I understood that he was known as "Fat Man" Williams or Williamson and I am certain that with my request and appeal I provided all these names, which made checking the records easy. Or, not "complex."

I do recall, after all these years, that I regarded it as quite remarkable for the so-called "security" plan for James Earl Ray, prepared by the Department's own experts before he was returned from London, to have him the only prisoner in an entire cell block and then for him to be with such a man as this informer, who had a long record of violence, when he was confined in that same cellblock for the evidentiary hearing.

This matter is now over seven years old and I would appreciate your taking it up now. There is no question of privacy because the facts as I report~~them~~ above are public domain. Moreover, the FBI and the organized-crime people, as well as the Civil Division, did not deny my above-quoted attestation, which also is public domain.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg