

Senator Paul Sarbanes  
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Baltimore, Md. 21201

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3/5/90

Dear Senator Sarbanes,

Thank you for taking the time when you are so busy for reading my letter about the gross violations of both the Freedom of Information and Privacy acts by the FBI and the Department of Justice. Thanks also for your offer of help. If I thought it had any chance of doing any good I'd ask for your help but I've seen hundreds of FBI and Department records relating to the requests of Members and, when the matters had any sensitivity for the FBI or the Department, one way or another the Members were fobbed off. Because they and their staffs are all so busy, the agencies get away with it.

My work, ~~work~~ which they cannot fault, is embarrassing to them so they do what they can that may undermine acceptance of it. I've written six books on the investigations of the assassination of President Kennedy and one on that of Dr. King. These and the countless lengthy and documented affidavits I've filed in innumerable FOIA lawsuits are, I believe, the basic works not in accord with the official solutions to those crimes. Not one person of the thousands I name has written to complain about how he or she was treated and there is no significant error in any of my work. So, one of the means by which the agencies can undermine it is by defaming me. The FBI generated a fairly large volume of such records and although it makes privacy claims to withhold information relating to those who are not the subject of FBI investigative interest, it discloses many such records, including identification of me, in its general JFK assassination releases of the end of 1977 and early 1978.

As your letter of the second states, I did contact the "appropriate officials." Consistent with a long past, I've had no response. After I wrote you, because they are doing more of this dirty work, disclosing information about me when I am not the subject of investigative interest - and disclosing selectively at that - I wrote the FBI several times, OIP several times, and the Office of Professional Responsibility. To OPR I alleged that under the Privacy Act what the FBI has done is a criminal act. As in the past, when I called undenied perjury to its attention, it has been silent and, as in the past, has done nothing at all. It is, in my experience, the whitewashing branch of the Department.

Compared to some of the other anti-American policies and acts of the present and past administrations this is small potatoes. Yet, although the difference in degree is vast, in principal what these agencies have done and are doing to me is like what we used to think was done only by the Gestapo and KGB. They don't consider violence, which they could not get away with, so they defame me and try to respond to my exposures of their failings and transgressions that way.

As a practical matter, they are immune in virtually any offense and as a practical matter the Congress not only does not have the time, it does not have the interest. The Members also have to be concerned about retaliation.

My purpose was to inform you, as it is now. But if you think it could do any good at all to phone the so-called Office of Professional Responsibility and ask whether or not the FBI crossed the line into illegality in disclosing to a third party (the records in fact are in the FBI's public reading room) information relating to me when I was not the subject of FBI investigative activity, it would at least compel them to face the matter or cook up some kind of phony explanation. They all know very well that they cannot hope to survive criticizing the FBI.

Again, thanks and best wishes.

Apologies for my typing. I'm almost 77, have impaired vision, and must keep my legs elevated, so the typewriter is to one side.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

*Harold Weisberg*