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October 8, 1975

Dear Ed:

CBS News is engaged in a major inquiry into the assassinations of John F. Kennedy, Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King and the attempt on the life of Governor George Wallace. I believe you already know about this project as a result of a request made last Monday by Leslie Midgley, the producer and Dan Rather, the principal correspondent, to Director Clarence Kelley of the FBI for permission to interview four agents or former agents who were concerned with the case of Lee Harvey Oswald.

Mr. Kelley's office notified us this morning that the request could not be granted because an on-going investigation is under way by your office which may involve at least some of these agents. The investigation, we understand, concerns the destruction of a letter left by Oswald at the FBI office in Dallas before the assassination. That action already has been reported in the press and confirmed by the FBI.

We asked for interviews with James Hosty, who visited Mrs. Oswald before the assassination and to whom Oswald's letter was reportedly addressed, and Gordon Shanklin, who was in charge of the Dallas office of the FBI in 1963.

In addition we asked for interviews with John Fain, who was the first agent to interview Oswald on his return from Russia, and Warren duBrueys, an agent we have reason to believe had contacts with Oswald in New Orleans.

Mr. Kelley indicated his own willingness to have these interviews conducted, saying the only problem was the Department of Justice investigation in progress. If we are going to include any of them in our proposed series they must be filmed within the next three or four weeks. If there is any possibility that the investigation will be concluded within that time I would greatly appreciate being advised of a possible date for filming.

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I am sure you are aware that if we cannot talk to these agents we have no recourse except to include in our broadcasts the stories of people who say they had various kinds of contacts with the FBI. Then Rather would go on to say that we are unable to verify the stories because the agents will not talk to us. This is not good for our journalistic enterprise and, I am sure you will agree, will not be good for the Federal Bureau of Investigation, already having credibility problems with the American people.

If your investigation concerns only events in Dallas and thus only Mr. Hosty and Mr. Shanklin, could we agree that Mr. Fain and Mr. duBrucys might talk to us, since they are concerned only with events in New Orleans, not Dallas?

Mr. Rather and Mr. Midgley tell me Mr. Kelley seemed completely assured that we are engaged in a serious and responsible investigation of these events and that we will treat them on the air in a serious and responsible manner. Please accept my own assurance in this regard.

It seems to me that it is in our mutual interest--and the interest of the public--that this problem be speedily resolved and the requested interviews and information be made available.

Best regards,

D. A. Salant

Dick Salant

Honorable Edward H. Levi  
Attorney General  
Department of Justice  
Constitution Avenue between 9th and 10th Street  
Washington, D.C. 20530

cc Mr. Clarence Kelley, Director  
Federal Bureau of Investigation

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