

23 February 1972

Dear Howard,

I have heard that Harold looks upon you as a son but I had not realized that you regard him as a father or a father-figure, even if an exasperating and aberrant one. Let me see if I can condense your main arguments:

(1) If Wecht sees the autopsy photos and X-rays and makes pronouncements on them, Hoover and Specter will be driven to desperation and seek by invidious means to shift the blame to others. (This was equally a prospect at every step of responsible criticism of the WR and, for that matter, could be an argument against publication of your own book.)

(2) A review by Wecht of the autopsy materials is unnecessary or less necessary because of "what Harold has" although Harold will neither disclose what he has to those concerned nor make it public. (Would you accept advice not to proceed with your book on the ground that someone has secret evidence which he will not divulge but which he assures you makes it superfluous and/or dangerous for you to publish?)

It is simply not rational nor ethical to insist on a certain course of action while at the same time refusing to specify the evidence and the reasoning behind the advice. Apparently you accept Harold's evidence and his judgment. I decidedly question his judgment, on the basis of his record on Garrison and other issues, and therefore I must question his mysterious evidence. Is it truly so earth-shaking that if I saw it my whole perspective and understanding of the case would be altered? Is it authentic and unassailable? or a product of misjudgment (e.g., the camera speed, the traffic lane lines, etc.)? or the product of a hoax and trap designed to produce non-action of the type advocated to Wecht?

(3) Harold will not share his transcendental secrets even if Wecht does get to see the autopsy materials and then calls a press conference. (I could understand Harold's effort to discourage and obstruct Wecht if Harold himself was about to publish his secret evidence. But if he has no plans to disclose it, why should everything else come to a halt? Moreover, anything published by Harold, however sensational and important, is completely lost in his turgid prose and his horrendous reputation, and might just as well have been kept secret forever for all the results achieved, as witness his book on James Earl Ray. Figuratively, his secret autopsy evidence does not exist and will never have any meaning or impact unless and until it is disclosed by an individual or individuals who command respect and attention and who are coherent.)

Incidentally, the real reason that I have not visited Harold is that an hour or two in his company in New York has always unnerved me too much for me to risk the agitation of a full day or a weekend chez Weisberg. Travelers to Frederick come back so discomfited and frantic for normal company as to confirm my fears of a visit.

As you say, time and further experience may alter your perceptions and your views on this specific question. I do hope so.

Best regards,

