

Mr. Gary Cohn
1401 16 St., NW
Wash., D.C. 20036

8/1/80

Dear Gary,

Yesterday's column item about me and the FBI as Scrooge caused a considerable reaction in the local paper, which I enclose. It was not my idea. They phoned when they got the column and read it. I appreciate the item because it may help undo this latest in years of dirty tricks. I do have the 1967 FBI record in which it states specifically its intent to stop me and my writing. They used the word "stop."

In the enclosed appeal I refer to a single inventory of FBI field offices ~~records~~ records having to do with the FBI's efforts to ruin Dr. King. Most of what they did, in general, is known, but not all. However, I know of no publication of the actual extent and the vast amounts of money and other costs involved. An inventory of 400 pages - and then incomplete- represents any enormity in paper alone, something over 200,000 records. And a fortune in improperly spent tax money.

The FBI's supposed explanations did not mislead Les. Explanations are meaningless in any event if as the court and the Department held, I qualify for the fee waiver. There is no claim that I don't. And I do.

The records are not for me personally in any event. They go to the people and I have already made the arrangements and begun the archival deposit.

But the supposed explanations are a Catch-22. They won't get into the FBI's reading room until I force them out of suppression and that I can't do without the fee waiver because I can't pay for them. So they cancel the fee waiver and all those records remain suppressed.

If they can make this stick, and damned few anywhere in the government tackle the FBI, it will help me personally because when I can't get the ~~records~~ records I can return to the writing I laid aside five years ago to undertake this public role. If they can't make it stick, it will be good for the country and for the future of FOIA, which is important to the country and any effort to cleanse and reform the errant agencies.

This archive of an aging and ill man who is without subsidy or any special means is now of about 60 file cabinets almost entirely of once secret records that without me, as is officially admitted elsewhere, would not be available.

It is not a quest for whodunits. It is a study of how government functions and malfunctions in time of great stress and thereafter. Much can be learned from it and students do, as reporters also get stories from it.

Long ago I invited you up to see and use it, as one of your then associates did. I renew the invitation.

Please thank Jack for carrying the item. Maybe it will help.

Best wishes,

Harold Weisberg