

4/10/67

Dear Mr. Copeland,

Please excuse my haste. I've just finished the draft of an overdue book I must read and have commitments for two others, both late. I'm writing, however, because I fear I did not make myself clear. I do not propose challenging an executive order. Two things are involved. One the order of the attorney general directing that everything in the possession of the government that was considered by the Commission be placed in the National Archives. Most of the things, if not 100% of them, in which I have an interest cannot by even the stretch of what Hoover calls a mind be classified. Such things as the spectrographic analysis of the bullet and the various fragments. By publicly ridiculing them I have been able to accomplish a few things, like getting the Zapruder camera into the archive.

The other has to do with the pictures and X-rays of the autopsy and what I regard as infinitely more important, the original notes of the autopsy. If these have not been destroyed, they are not in the archive. They were by description entered into evidence. They have been purged from every version, the files, and I've checked duplicate files, from which there is no sheet indicating withdrawal, from the printed exhibit where where they must appear, etc. I have receipts tracing them from the autopsy bench to the White House physician to the Secret Service, and the doctors described what he held in his hand as the exhibit was being entered. He had and identified a Xeroxed copy. Now, the mechanism used for the continued suppression of the pictures and X-rays is an inapplicable law under which the General Services Administrator is empowered to accept private property for the archive on Presidents under conditions stipulated by the donors. What was done here is a cute trick to get everyone off the hook. The stipulation is suppression. What really happened, however, is that the GSA accepted restrictions not on private property but on improperly given away government papers. He therefore could not accept them under this law because they were the property of the government to begin with, if not the executive branch, certainly of the Naval Hospital. One thing is not clear doubtful, there was no authority for giving these away. So, these are the things I want to test. I have no facilities, no means of paying for it. And I have gone through channels and exhausted my administrative remedies. I have all of this in writing and I shall publish it in WHITEWASH III, which is the third of the books I'm now working on. Sincerely,

ML

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April 6, 1967

Mr. Harold Weisberg
Coq d'Or Press
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Dear Mr. Weisburg:

I am terribly sorry for my delay in answering your letter of January 31st. I have been out of town in trial most of this time and I am just now getting my correspondence answered. Please forgive me.

Concerning the Archives, I do not believe the law provides for a remedy against an Executive order making secret certain government records. The courts have always held that the secrecy order on the part of the Executive branch of the government was a function which could not be questioned by it's equal branch, the judiciary.

In any event, it appears from press reports that the good District Attorney in New Orleans has made a much more efficient gathering and study of the same and additional evidence and it looks like he is on the trail of the person or persons responsible. I would, of course, like to hear from you further on the matter and I am looking forward to meeting you on your next trip to Texas.

With warm personal regards, I am

Very truly yours,

David G. Copeland
David G. Copeland

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