

Mr. James Earl Ray, 65477  
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Dear Jimmy,

While it is apparent that you will not listen and that the time I spend trying to inform you is at best wasted and at worst merely angers you, I have not spent all this time trying to help you to be silent when you are engaged in a course of self-destruction.

The very best you can now hope for is that if you are tried you will have absolutely no credibility. And I do think that before long, absent the predictable effects of what you have been doing, you have a very good chance for a trial.

Although some of your letters of witty they have a way of being taken other than as you intend, like the ill-advised Lewis letter. These go back to the Eastland letter. And you have had a literate lawyer who would have said what you wanted said properly and without all the adverse consequences.

What is attributed to you through Kershaw is very hurtful to you. This is really why I write. I do not know all his exact words because that story received scant attention in Washington. This morning's paper carries a long story in which the House seems to admit that its assassinations committee is not even legally constituted. (It includes a quote of something I said a month ago, that they are zany.)

You seem to forget things you have said in the past that were not true. This is relevant to Kershaw's statement that you will "name" those he says you call "conspirators." Cry wolf again? You did this around Xmas 1973, the reporters checked it out and it was not true. Moreover, you also had no personal knowledge. You said you had been told this. But for you to be able to identify conspirators you have to be one and have to have been at the scene of the crime. Or, you have to be guilty of murder one.

Kershaw also says you were denied the opportunity to talk about ~~conspirators~~ and thinks like that. You know this is false. You know that you refused to talk about it. You know that for example on the telephone number I tried very hard and for a long period of time. DJ had it, Foreman, McMillan and the others had it, only your defense did not have it. So you made false charges against those who did try long and hard to help you. This kind of behavior will be held against you by others. It is typical of the way you have of doing things the wrong way. Although for years I have not gotten on well with Bud, and you have known it, I cautioned you against the way you were firing him. What you did will not stop hurting you and it was totally unnecessary. Now you have done the same thing with Jim, who quite literally has given up years of his life to help you without pay and having no other income has had serious problems from it. This will hurt you, too, because it is part of a pattern of behavior that the world outside jails does not accept. It also further reduces the credibility you can expect. I think you have now left yourself no credibility and that you will learn this if you do testify to the committee that has found you guilty with no investigation and without a single hearing of any kind in six months.

Kershaw's statement includes the dictation of terms for your testimony. This gets to the unwisdom of getting a lawyer who does not bother to learn anything about either the case of the Congress, one who will do blindly what you ask of him whether or not it is good for you. I have difficulty believing there is a competent lawyer in any backwater who does not know that even if such assurances were given they would or could be lived up to. There is no way anyone can keep a Member from asking any question he wants to. There are many problems with the Kershaw statement about your terms for testifying but I'm not going to try to go into them. They can, for example, merely subpoena you and ask you any damned thing they want to and put you in a position where you may have to look bad by pleading the fifth. What protection do you now have if you do appear under the Kershaw offer? None and you will be made not only to appear even more guilty but guilty on your own terms. You may think otherwise but I'm telling you it would be child's play for me to make a liar of you based on what you have said. If you want that before a committee and the attention you think it will get you your head needs examination. So also does it if you think they'll risk having you testify in public. What happens in executive session becomes known only to the degree they want it to be known. They can and committees always do leak what they want to leak and

suppress the rest. This was one of the protections Jim was seeking and could not get. I was there. It began in different form with me and Sprague, when I asked for an assurance he would not leak what I gave him of my own work and would not put me in a conflict of interest position. He gave me that assurance with big speeches and immediately did the opposite. I'm surprised you do not know prosecutors better than you reflect.

No self-respecting committee would think of dealing with anything like the Kershaw proposal and if he does not know it then you have made still other trouble for yourself. But if they do deal that way it will be worse because it means all over again that they are bankrupt. It means a great likelihood that members will holler their heads off on the floor of the House and make still other stinks that can't help you and can hurt you. Whether or not it has a right to be the Congress is always very proud and loud in protecting what it regards as its prerogatives. If you want nothing but stinks you are going about it the right way.

Bearing on leaks, some of my records were not returned and they told me that they could not find them anywhere. I did give them a whole box. I still have what they returned in the box in which it was returned.

So you have again converted yourself into the cheapest of possible spectacles. There is no more that you can now be if you do testify. It need not have been this way. You made it this way by the most foolish undercutting of Jim when he was trying to work out those meaningful protections that are possible and my telling Sprague that you are headstrong and a setup in the foolishness you wrote him about me. He knew very well that I had not represented myself as your spokesman and that my concern was for their integrity. You gave him also another reading on you, exactly that he got from DJ, that you are obsessive-compulsive. If you get to testify you will now be manipulated over this. He has a better reading on you than any shrink can give him but he does have the readings of the shrinks, as above. You'd better face it, you are this way and your recent conduct, really misconduct is ample proof of it. When they know they have found you guilty and you ask to appear before them how else can they take it when they hold all the cards?

A committee is not a court where even the worst of judges can protect some rights. You now can't even be sure of taking the fifth because they can immunize you on that and then if you refuse to answer be sentenced all over again. This is not what you may suspect, what difference does it make when you are already doing 99 years. You are oblivious of all you do not want to consider. You really did have a very good chance. In spite of yourself you may still have it. I think so. So you have now created a situation, multi-faceted at that, in which you can keep yourself in jail even if acquitted.

Kershaw knows nothing about Congress. But this is not true of Time's counsel, Schwartz, who ran the Church committee and in that made a big whitewash of it, letting out only what the FBI and CIA wanted let out and then making it seem like a big expose. Meanwhile, another of that committee is secretly working on still another whitewash as an intelligence-oversight committee subcommittee. It may become public today. (The week from today there is supposed to be the disclosing of the real Raoul by a very tight nut, something else for you to contend with before a committee. It has already had a big fight with him over it.)

I'm sorry for you and your compulsions. They are one of the reasons I've not been able to tell you in detail what I told you truthfully in essence about the present state of the new evidence. Another is your self-destructive association with people we know very well and know as very bad people. Because of your persisting in this relationship I have not been able to tell you about what they are now up to. I have sent you enough for you to see. If you refuse to see I cannot deny you that right. What remains to be seen is if you can be protected against yourself in this. You might think of what a "aile" could do with you on the stand and going into these relationships and facing you with their statements of your guilt and your continuing association with them.

Despite all of this I am convinced you did not kill King. I therefore am going to do all I can. I have done nothing and said nothing about Kershaw until he gave me a dependable reading on himself. He has not done that. I will have nothing to do with him. I can't speak for Jim and I don't know what is in his mind. I will therefore do what I can in the ways that remain open. I am still hopeful that it will be soon. I am certain you have reduced the probabilities. I'm sincerely sorry, sincerely.