

Rt. 12, Frederick, Md. 21701
3/16/77

Mr. Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr., Speaker
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. O'Neill,

Your letter of March 14 is not even a decent form letter.

I'd have been less offended if your staff had ignored completely all the time I took to try to be of service to you, to try to put you in a position to preserve your reputation and that of the Congress.

The kind of specifics I addressed to you are not responded to by summarizing news events, like the resignation of Mr. Gonzalez or your appointment of Mr. Stokes. Nor are they by the meaningless "I appreciate your concern in this matter."

So harvest the thorns you have sowed.

My work is not the pursuit of idle conspiracy theories embroidered on the fabric of the emperor's clothes. It is factual and it addresses the functioning, which really means the non-functioning, of our basic institutions when confronted with these great tragedies. From the completion of my first book in February 1965 I have urged an investigation by the Congress. If it is a bitter disappointment to me to find that after more than a decade of cowardice Congress smells the printer's ink and has made an unseemly spectacle of itself. Its misconduct is perhaps the most indecent of all. Your response to my offers of fact on this so that you might exercise leadership, save the Congress from the more than justified headline of Keystone Cops and Gong Shows and save the nation still another great trauma is to tell me that you have replaced Mr. Gonzalez with Mr. Stokes. (Thanks you for not including the sorry spectacle of his advertising-agency misuse of the King evidence he cannot understand and the committee should have subpoenaed months before it did. I have intimate knowledge of that evidence, having examined it under court order in October 1974.)

As this committee gasps what should be its last breathe we today have the TV approach to Congressional responsible with the Trafficante superspectacular. Is it possible that you are qualified to be Speaker and not qualified to know that even the calling of this mobster represents a conclusion in advance of any investigation? For cheap headlines it is good. For learning what happened to our martyred President it is not good. But it may muddy diplomatic waters a bit and protect those who should not be protected by an investigating Congress.

Saturday night CBS TV news had an item on this committee "checking out" what is referred to as "a new lead in the case" of Dr. King. Of this "new lead" CBS quoted "A source close to the committee" (I presume there is none closer than its flack) who "admitted he was stunned that the detailed report had become public."

Frankly, this "stuns" me, too. I did not know the Congress was hiring those who cannot read (and at what salaries!). That "new lead" is the work of a friend of mine who was following up on what I published in 1971. The article he wrote was published last September. He used it as part of his job application with the committee. It was reprinted in one of the more paranoid of the "conspiracy" newsletters, February issue. The MIT was picked up by a Dallas TV station. Want more tracing of this hot "new lead" of the Congress and its \$13,000,000 investigation you seem determined to protect from itself? Or if you'd like I'll do this with each and every one of the multitudinous planted stories. All are plagiarized and none is a beginning point where there is relevance.

There is more bait for the Congress.

There is the coming departure of Sprague that with the resignation of Congressman Gonzalez will be represented as some promising new deal.

There is the bait of James Earl Ray as a witness, represented as his anxious wish, which is not what he wrote - and I do not have to see the letters to know this. I know Ray. I have spent more time with him than his lawyers.

You as Speaker have no problem with this committee calling Ray at the ~~start~~ beginning - not that normally we await a beginning after six months - after it has filed a report calling him the assassin?

None with the committee boasting its having a waiver from him so it can question the lawyer who put him away without any investigation? It is I who had a disagreement with Sprague over this, I who took Ray's lawyer Jim Lesar to confer with Sprague over this last November, and I who assure you that Sprague assured him that no such thing would happen without Lesar's assent. He was not consulted. He was bypassed. But I have Sprague's letter in response to my protests. He said they and I were "totally and completely" correct.

This is the concern of the Congress over which you preside for the most basic of legal rights?

It would be better if one of your staff did not tell me again that "I appreciate your concern in this matter." You do not. It would be better if they reduce the waste of tax money by the slight cost of a non-responsive letter.

Do not worry about the watchmen waking in vain. The Congress is not guarding the nation.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

The Speaker's Rooms
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

14 March 1977

Mr. Harold Weisberg
Route 12
Frederick, Maryland 21701

Dear Mr. Weisberg:

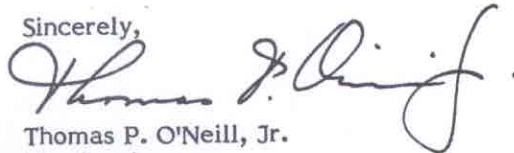
This will acknowledge your recent correspondence concerning the House of Representatives investigation into the circumstances surrounding the deaths of President John F. Kennedy and Reverend Martin Luther King.

I appreciate your concern for this matter. As you may be aware, on March 8, 1977 the House of Representatives accepted the resignation of Congressman Henry Gonzalez as Chairman of this committee. Congressman Louis Stokes (D-Ohio), has been named to replace him.

Thank you for taking the time to contact me.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,



Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr.
The Speaker