Attprney General Janet Reno
The Department of Justice
Washington, DC 20530

Harold Weisberg
7627 Old Receiver Rd.
Frederick, MD 21702
4/9/98

Dear General Reno,

Yesterday I was 85 and today I feel much older than that. I hope you and those who screne your mail can understand that when I have accumulated all these years I can write you without expectation of any personal advantage, and I seek none. I am a writer but I have no books in the stores and none ready for any publisher. I have also been an investigator, for the United States Senate and for James Earl Ray. What impels me to write you is based on what I learned in reading many dozens, if not hundreds, of responses to letters to attorneys general written by those who had no personal knowledge and wrote in accord with a policy that had been fixed for them.

(Please excuse my typing. It cannot be any better.)

It will be a relatively simple matter for the FBI to provide you or some of your lawyers with disproof of some of the recent allegations made on behalf of Ray, including some of those given you by Mrs. Coretta King. And it will be another great national tragedy if this happens. It will also cause more disillusionment with government. Within my not inconsiderable experience popular dissatisfaction with the official explanations of our political assassinations has been and remains a great cause of disillusionment and dissatisfaction.

Those seeking a trial for Ray, who never had one, face a special situation that makes special demands on them and eliminates much that under other circumstances they could use. You know the law and I do not, but it is my understanding they cannot use what has been used. The court will not accept that, not as the basis of granting Ray a trial. However, this does not mean that those with an interest in justice, in learning the truth, need ignore what has been forgotten and has not been presented to you by the widow King and those who were with her.

I conducted the investigation for the successful habeas corpus petition after that which had been done by Ray's lawyers had failed. I then conducted the investigation for the two weeks of evidentiary hearing in federal district court in Memphis. I located and prepared the witnesses and, as the transcripts of those hearings leave without any real question, they stacked. They all, every one of them, survived cross-examination some of which was vigorous and some of which indicates that my motel room was bugged. If the Department does not have those transcripts, I do.

As a result of the case we put on, and I am sure you are aware that when we hoped for a trial we could not put on all of which we knew, when the judge wrote the preordained decision, the only one he could write and hope to survive in that

clime, ~~that~~ ate the nature of the case we put on, the facts we established, forced him to say what was literally true, that guilt or innocence were not before him! What was before him was the voluntariness of the plea and the effectiveness of counsel. Aside from the unrefuted evidence we produced, on both counts Ray should have prevailed.

The question that really needs to be faced in the interest of justice and in what I would hope there is, in the interest of making some effort to restore faith in the government, is not by any means limited to whether or not there was a conspiracy in the assassination if Martin Luther King, Jr. The real question that will remain, if there ia any inquiry with such a limitation imposed on it, is going to be, perhaps forever, who did kill the victim?

There is, as a matter of sworn and unrefuted testimony, no possibility that Ray was the assassin.

The record exists. It also is not going to be ignored forever. I have already arranged for a historian to take these transcripts and other of my work and use them as the basis of a book. But I thunk it would be much better for the country if this cleansing were by government which had failed and which had earned the disgust and disillusionment with it that was justified.

In this I ask nothing personal, nothing for myself. I write instead to offer to be of help, as I am certain I can be of help, if you and/or the administration want to clean this up once and for all.

That is possible - given the willingess.

I have not driven out of Frederick for more thah 20 years because that is unsafe for me. I leave Frederick only when I am driven to medical appointments. I do not offer to go to Washington but I do offer to be questioned, interviewed, and I strongly suggest being taped, and I am willing for this to be with any of the agents the FBI may want to be present or any of the lawyers of those parts of the Department that failed. I ask only that I be questioned by one in whom you have confidence and that the questioning and the environment be fair.

You should understand that several Department divisions and the FBI have a strong interest in preserving the official position on the assassination and that this can be of influence if you ccept my offer. I am willing to face that, but yku should be aware of it.

One of my many FOIA lawsuits was for the government's records in this assassination. There was strong resistence to that effort and the Department stondwalled it for many years and by many means. One that you may have trouble believing is clear and without question: the Department actually demanded that the jhdge

appoint me as its consultant - in my suit against the Department! Not only that, the Department defrauded me of the payment it was to have made and said it would.

All of this and more is recorded and is without any question, unreal as it may seem to you. We, my lawyer and I, have the transcripts and they exist at the court.

My lawyer in these FOIA actions and assistant counsel then in the Ray defense was then a young lwyer who had not yet taken his District of Cokumbia bar examinations. He and I had two impeded days for discovery. He also presented most of the evidence to the court in that evidentiary hearing. So, if you accept my offer, I hope ypu will include James H. Lesar (393-1921) in part because he may remember what I do not and in part because we did some of the things that I think should be of interest to you together.

Honesty and fairness impel me to add more. I hope you will take it as I mean it and I do not mean it as any boasting.

I wrote the first book on the Warren Commission and the JFK assassination. It is critical of many who were in official position and to this day I have not had a call or a letter from any one of them complaining that I was unfair or inaccurate. This is also true of the books I wrote after that. That first book is still used as a college text and another truth you may find hard to believe but is true and can be provided, when I put myself under oath rather than rely on immune lawyer's pleading 20 years ago to attest that the FBI was providing perjury to that court, The FBI and the Department, whether or not either believed it, told that court by way of what turned out to be a successful defense of the sworn allegation of perjury, that I could make such allegations ad infinitim because I knew more about the JFK assassination and its investigation than anyeone working for the FBI. That was FBI lab perjury, too!

And, contrary to what your IG said recently, I attributed that perjury to the Lab and am prepared to do that in the Ray case, with myself under oath.

I wrote the first book on the King assassination and it continues to be basic. I have had no complaint from anyone about whom I wrote in it.

Because publisher and major-media attitude toward the political assassinations makes publication of other than what the government said close to impossible, When it was bo longer physically possible for me to publish the books I wrote I continued this work on a different basis, as a criticial examination of what was done by both sides. There are innumerable book-length manuscripts of this completed in rough draft, when possible for me retyped and distributed among a number of professors. I also do that with much of my correspondence and I will

be doing that with this. I do, to the degree possible for me, seek to keep others informed by making all my work and all those hundreds of thousands of pages I obtained by FOIA freely available to all. (All for the most part means those with whom I do not agree.) I believe that FOIA makes those of us who use it surrogate for all the people and have lived with and practised that belief.

This request by Mrs. King, with the modification I suggest above, does provide the government with an opportunity for it to, please excuse and understand me, come clean and to do that with minimum difficulty for the government.

If the governmet does not do as asked and do it openly and with complete honesty, history will not be kind to it and to those involved or not involved in it.

If you want to do some checking, you can get an abundance of lies from the FBI from its character assassinations of me but you will not get from it a single illustration of my not having been truthful and did I ever provide it with affidavits in so many lawwsuits! This also goes for the governments lawyers in those lawsuits.

Among those in academe who are familiar with my work and have used it and can give you an opinion of its dependability and of mine are Dr. Gerald McKnight, head of history abd political science of local Wood College (to which I have deeded all my work and my property); Dr. David Wrone, professor of history just resigned from the University of Wisconsin (715/344-8148), and two sociologists, Dr. Dennis Macdonald, of St Anselms's College in Manchester, New Hampshire and Dr. Gerald Ginocchio, of Wofford College, Spartanburg, SC.

You may not want to ask any reporter but of the dozens who have used me as a source, without ever a single kickback, one who does not agree with me is at hand for you, George Lardner, of the Washington Post. I am confident that he will tell you that I never misinformed him and that nothing I ever told him kicked back on him - for the past 30 years.

My days are numbered. I am quite feeble. I do not take this time for any personal reason and do in the hope that despite the odds this does reach you and you do give it serious thought. Please feel free to challenge me on any of what I say. Please believe also that I write in your interest and in that of the government and without any possibility of any personal gain. It is obvious that if you do as I offer I will be giving up all the rights I have to my own work. And at 85 and in seriously impaired health, there is no bright and shining future for which I can hope.

I'm sorry that reading and perhaps condensing this is beyond me now and that my typing cannot be any better. On doctors orders my legs are both elevated as

I write this, with the left leg, rather foot, as high as the heart. I tell you this for more than an explanation of my poor typing. It is also to give you to understand that there has been some discomfort in taking this time for which I do, sincerely, hope you will take the time and ask any and all questions that occur to you or to your staff.

Please believe me, it is in your interest, it is in the government's interest, and it is in the nation's interest because it provides a means of putting history that was made crooked by the government straight again.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

All of this may sound strange to you but I nonetheless add, as credentials, what may seem stranger: that two members of the Warren Commission agreed with me! One was the Republican, Senator Cooper, the other the Democrat, Senator Russell. I do not take your time for the explanation I can provide and document but I do assure you and can provide copies of the records they left for archival purposes. With Russell it was in corrrspondence and Cooper added an eloquent oral history for the Russell archive. Russell had a high opinion of my work and encouraged it until his dying day, and this also is documented with his letters.

If Donald E. Wilkes is still on the Univ. Georgia law faculty at Athens I'm sure he will confirm the above. He wrote about it for local papers.