

Harold Weisberg
Rt. 8, Frederick, Md. 21701
9/10/74

Ms. Jan Scudder
38 Gramercy Park
New York, N.Y. 10010

Dear Ms. Scudder,

Wayne Chastain has told me about you and your late husband work on the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

I am James Earl Ray's investigator. The entire defense is ~~very~~ very ~~long~~ long so we are without funds for paying for files and are, as a matter of fact, now limited in other ways because the financial drain of the years of effort.

After years of stalling we now have the case close to an evidentiary hearing, the purpose of which is to determine if he will have a trial. This hearing is now scheduled for 10/22. Its present status is that after we won a favorable ruling on discovery the state is appealing to the 6th circuit and, we assume, will thereafter go to the Supreme Court again in an effort merely to delay more. Without gross injustice, we expect to prevail at the evidentiary hearing and at the trial to follow.

Wayne has told me of the high reputation your husband had as a reporter, of the exceptional opinion of his capability Rodding Carter had of him, something of his work on this assassination, and of your understanding of and familiarity with this work.

Wayne also told me that others took credit for some of your husband's work and of a dispute he had with Russell Thompson.

Our need for any evidence you may be able to supply is not for this evidentiary hearing but for the defense, unless you husband's work included any deficiencies in the original defenses, the work of the highly-paid writers who latched onto these lawyers, or anything else relating to any lack of performance by these lawyers, conflicts of interest, etc.

For the trial itself, however, we will need all the evidence we can get and we should have it enough in advance to permit investigation where necessary. So I write to inquire into your willingness as well as to give you an understanding of the legal situation and the needs of the defense, which we equate with the interests of justice. Because it is not easy for me to get to New York, if you are willing to help I would appreciate knowing how long you think it would take to go over your husband's relevant files. In fact, if you could give me an idea of their content, that could be particularly helpful, if he broke them down by subject. One area of your husband's expertise that Wayne mentioned could be of special interest, labor racketeering, if he found it pertinent in his Memphis investigations.

Wayne says the dispute between your husband and Thompson was over Thompson's refusal to let you husband have some of his own work back. I understood from Thompson that he had much evidence. He was long on talk with me and short on producing anything. Because I'll be down there again before too long, if you are aware on anything that can serve to guide me I'd appreciate knowing it. If you have any other suggestions I would welcome them, too.

Thanks for any help you may be able to provide.

bbs: WC says John Sator excellent reporter with Time and Carter, died from pills, etc. She has resumed maiden name, still friendly with Carters. Sator worked out of N.C., quit Carter time King, ass. to work in Memphis on case.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg