

Rt. 12, Frederick, Md. 21701
9/20/75

Senator Richard Schweiker
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C.

Dear Senator Schweiker,

This letter is prompted by a reading of your statement of September 8, "Schweiker Asks Reopening of JFK Killing Probs."

Several weeks prior to your issuing this statement a member of your staff phoned me for help on the subject, not telling me it was for a statement. Earlier this week I spent most of a day that should have resulted in saving your staff considerable time at best and you some trouble if they went ahead with their plan to interview the man they had asked to stay in Washington so they could. He told me he had been interviewed by them once.

Nobody pays me for my time but I am willing to take time to be helpful to those in a position to do what this subject needs.

What you are now asking for is the conclusion of my first book, which also was the first book on the subject of the Warren Commission. I am no less for this now than I was February 15, 1965, when that first book was completed. I am so much for this that, despite whatever you may have heard to the contrary, I am the one person in all the world who has devoted himself to it continuously, without income or subsidy and working extraordinarily long days. To bring out as much as possible of my work I have been forced to become my own publisher. It has kept me in debt.

I hope this gives me some kind of credentials and is an indication of sincerity of purpose. If you desire better credentials, I'll send you a copy of the FBI's statement to a federal court that I know more about the subject than anyone there.

I am, of course, pleased that you drew upon work uniquely mine in your statement. I told your staffer about it. Quite likely others told you or your staff about it without explaining its history.

Your statement attracted attention. In a society like ours citizens have to be informed. However, the omissions in your statement, omissions that might have helped it and would have made it more faithful to the reality, had the effect of denying people anything you did not say. I think your purposes would have been better served by people reading the full texts of those executive session transcripts.

Your statement says no more about these transcripts than that they were "previously classified" in the text and of one that it was "Declassified 6-12-74." These are not full statements and they do not represent how they were declassified. If you were not informed I think your interest might be served by learning why.

Both are declassified as the result of my Freedom of Information Act efforts. I have been trying to break them loose since 1967, without any help from those who enjoy large reputations in the field of political assassinations. I know of one case only, my current case, in which government resistance was stronger and more persistent. If I had not been willing to challenge the government to charge me on its witness, J. Lee Rankin, with perjury, my effort might not have succeeded. This is not an easy way to end improper suppressions. I knew the risk I was taking, as I did on a number of other similar occasions. I know who does the prosecuting.

The crediting of sources is neither abnormal nor unethical, although to my knowledge your office deals with those who never do, preferring to claim as their own the work of others. Except for what they say of themselves they have no original work to their credit. None that is accurate and of consequence.

This gets me to the point of my letter. There is nothing I ask of you and there is now no way you can direct those who received your statement to the one book on which it draws. Much as I would like people to know the rest of its contents and to be able to recover more of the costs of the work.

Most of those who are best known in the field in which I am in all ways the senior are not dependable sources and are known not for their dedication to accuracy or hard work but for their self-promotions. People so engaged do not tell themselves what they are up to. Most of those who get to know them have no basis for independent judgement. We live in a society in which most of our beliefs are fixed by promotions.

The end of April I made a speech in which I addressed this in a different way. If you are interested I'll be glad to send you a copy. (In my financial condition I'd appreciate a franked envelope if you want this.) I declared my belief that with the changes in national attitudes there was hope that the Congress would interest itself and that we all owed the Congress scrupulous accuracy and selflessness. I also ticked off a long list of illustrations of what others did and said and asked who benefits. To this day not one of those of whom I spoke, and I identified few by name, has made a single complaint to me or alleged even the slightest exaggeration or misrepresentation.

I do fear Members may be hurt. I do know - I have proof of it - that executive agencies keep close tabs on what is said. I do not believe that their purpose is merely to collect more paper. And tapes. Other Members have made inaccurate statements and claims. Parts of yours might have been worded better.

Unlike those who promote themselves I spend my time working. I have no ambition in this or I'd have been at your office long ago. When I have done most of the work in the field there would be basis for my going to Members. However, my desire is to continue this work. Work is not done by talk. I have taken this time in what I hope you will understand is your interest instead of putting it on the book on which I am working, one I think will interest you much when I can print it. (A list of what is still in print is enclosed. It does not include what I have written and not been able to print.)

Nor do I solicit an invitation to your office. If you were to extend one I would have to decline it. My desire is not to engage in controversy, public or private, or to attract attention to myself. It is first to complete the book on which I am working and then to return to others, some partly written and some fully researched. (I am, unlike those who talk about it, also in court trying to end further suppressions and fighting through administrative remedies on other cases.)

I do want a full, honest and completely public investigation, the conclusion of my first book. Consistent with this I write to caution you lest without intending it you make a serious error that could be costly in more ways than one. I am aware of the problem checking what you say can mean. I also want you to be. And to be aware of the possible consequence of error in which you, personally, may be completely innocent.

If at any time anyone working for you wants to consult me by phone, I have no objection to the taping of it and you will find I am quite prepared to stand by whatever I may say.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg