SS

Mr. John Hartingh
FBI FOIA/PA Unit
J. Edgar Hoover FBI Bldg
Washington, D.C.

7/9/77

Dear John,

Jim has given me the newest of the FBI and other official versions of what the FBI did with my personal property, namely records indicating there was a plot to overthrow the government that involved the then Chief of Staff of the Army.

First the FBI tells me that after it gave a copy to the Criminal Division it destroyed its (!) copy. I mean, after all, what is more ordinary than the Chief Of Staff plotting a revolt? Why keep that kind of record?

Then I told you of or sent you proof of the return of my property to the FBI. Naturally the FBI then needed a different story.

What kind of records does the FBI keep anyway? What kind of search was conducted by whom that on the one hand shows an alleged destruction of my property circa 1940 and what you have now told Jim, in 1971? Two sets? One set? Any records of any copies elsewhere? The FBI did not know where I was in 1971? I had not complained to the Attorney General in 1969 about reports of FBI intrusions into my rights? Had not been promised that the Director would respond? And instead of responding he destroys my personal property? What are you people, a bunch of reds or anarchists that you have no respect for personal property? For some time it has been clear that rights mean nothing to the FBI, which appears to regard the Constitution as the basis of all subversion. But that it does not respect private property, legitimate ownership - well!

For a long time there was nothing I could do about those records when it turned out that the FBI really did not live by the Boy Scout Manual. That the FBI stole them from me did not and does not mean that I surrendered my sacred property rights. Once FOIA was amended, on my very first meeting with an FBI FOIA/PA agent I informed him I would want those papers, aka property, returned.

I placed a great value on those records. I kept the box in which the others were returned by the FBI until recently, until after I had reason to believe the remainder would soon be returned to its lawful owner, aka me. By now I presume (I do not have to tell you the great cost I had invested in those records.

How many FBIs are there? I know a little about the one that obtains and preserves a newspaper story about me saying I am a man on the go - as indeed I then was. That was not only kept, it was given to others, a natural reflection of the Bureau's deep concern for (b)(7)(C) of which I've seen so much of late. This was worthy of preservation and distribution but records relating to a plot against the government was not? Not even when it was private property?

I will be wanting every record, no matter how seemingly inconsequential. I expect no claim to any exemption and I see no basis for any. I am particularly interested in any records of distribution, referrals, uses of any kind, records of authorization of destruction, citation of legal authority, names of the wreckers and destroyers, etc. I mean if there remains a paperclip I want that, unexpurgated.

If the FBI cannot restore my property I think the least it can now do is get estimates of the value of what has not existed in our history since Benedict Arnold.

When I learned recently that hundreds of attachments had disappeared from FBI HQ records - before it was known of the depredations of the Scientologists - I gave that unprecedented problem considerable thought. My then solution was that the FBI would be safe if it could recruit some Brownies. They have an exemplary record of keeping honest and faithful count of cookies. Now I'm wondering if it could not use a few of the "E-eaters" it probably picked up recently.

Sincerely, Harold Weisberg