Jornet Jet

6/28/77

Dear James McManus,

Your yesterday's letter with enclosure are helpful to me so despite a great time pressure to prepare for an FOIA hearing Thursday of today's mail I respond to you on the chance of being helpful to you and so that I may make a note for myself of the carbon. Otherwise I'll forget.

Having read the text I know what happened, The same nice guys, young and probably fresh from a reading of Ben Hecht, have just done a similar thing to me. It will haunt me for a long time from what my increasing and not inconsiderable experience with official files and filing tells me.

It has to have been Bob Sirkin and Bill O'Reilly of WFAA. They are nice guys, they are able reporters , they just have to learn what reporting really is if it to be responsible, other t an a sensation that can puff them with the station by wire attention.

They tried to get me to say that Ray's escape attempt was a conspiracy to kill him. That has to mature to become greasy kid stuff. But I did not want to lay them out on their own station so I evaded. Without my knowing it they fed UPI a story inventing my saying what I did not say and making the supposed paraphrase appear to be legit by taking what I did say and quoting it as relevant when it was addressed to another aspect. I never believed it and I didn't even suspect it. Years ago I told Ray he'd never make it unless he could nab a coal car if he made it over the fence. This is exactly what I said when he first got out on the 10th, that if there was no convenient slow train the dogs would get him.

When I got home I wrote and asked UPI to file a correction for the record. The morgues thus would have it and so would the FBI. No response.

The same pair, I feel confident, added to what my friend Dan Christensen had added to my work of years ago.

I'd love to know who your "stunned" committee source was xxxx "that the detailed report had become public." What else when it was printed in Miami magazine and Dan used it in his job application?

I guess the reason you could not reach an FBI spokesman for comment is because they did not want the story not used, did not want to have to say only "no comment" when they had checked the story out and they knew I had that, too. They have great fun with all the stroies they can denounce, often the reporters, use such things to defend the FBI against everything and anything, and if all else fails fabricate to have records to cite.

They have done this with me in the case in court Thursday. It is on the King assassination but more importantly on the FOIA itself and what effort we can make to cut back on their campaign to destroy it if they can and frustrate it daily. I've got them calling the public record investigatory files, blacking out the names of their own agents in news stories on privacy claims, even a directive that they violate the law with me going back to 1969. I wish some of the major media would take in some of these proceedings that in my cases and not generally cut and dry. They'd learn about FOIA and the spooks.

I would put your 3rd graf differently: having been clobbered in its adventure in news faking the House assassins committee has opted the star-chamber approach, this far without any reported criticism of it.

If you really want to cover what can be covered, and for more reasons than your correct statement of cost/benefit I believe CBS will not want to. There are other approaches. I can give you every hidden name in all they've leaked and my prior files on all. It could be real Keystone Kops fun interviewing those characters and then the committee. Their last witness was Loran Hall. I know him well. They forced him to take the fifth. There is much he would love to talk about if protected against the committee. He was in on the anti-Castro plots. I'm sure the only reason the committee went through its charade of the 7th is for Sylvia Odio to eyeball Hall. This means she said "not the guy" or she'd have followed him as a witness. Locating Odion, no longer Odio, is easy. Thanks and best wishes,

Program Transcripts
SPECIAL PROJECTS DEPARTMENT
CBS News

CBS TELEVISION NETWORK

CBS EVENING NEWS WITH BOB SCHIEFFER **(Excerpt)**

Saturday, March 12, 1977
6:30 - 7:00 PM, EST

ANNOUNCER: This is the CBS EVENING NEWS WITH BOB SCHIEFFER.

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SCHIEFFER: The House committee investigating the assassination of civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr. is checking out what could be a new lead in the case. Jim McManus reports from Washington.

JIM McMANUS: The Assassinations Committee reportedly has been informed that two men in Washington, D.C. discussed killing Martin Luther King, Jr. three days before he was shot to death in Memphis, Tennessee. A Dallas television news report said the story has been confirmed by a retired Miami detective, Lieutenant Charles Sapp. Sapp reportedly got his information from Walter Somersett, then publisher of an independent labor trade journal in Miami. Somersett's story is that he overheard two union men discussing King after a 1968 National Labor Relations Board hearing on the then continuing Memphis sanitation workers' strike. At least one of the union men allegedly stated there was no choice but to kill Martin Luther King, Jr. if he continued his intervention in the Memphis strike situation.

A source close to the new King murder investigation admitted he was "stunned" that the detailed report had become public. Staff investigators are known to be following new leads in both the King and Kennedy assassinations. The chairman of the King investigation subcommittee would not flatly deny that the report is true.

DEL. WALTER FAUNTROY [Assassination Committee Member]: Well, in the first instance, I am not in position either to confirm or deny this report. It-- it-- and that statement should not be taken either as an indication of its truth or its falsehood.

McMANUS: After the King assassination, Lieutenant Sapp reportedly made a written report on Somersett to then Miami Police Chief Walter Hedley, with a copy to the FBI. The report was not made public. Neither Lieutenant Sapp, Miami police nor FBI spokesmen could be reached for comment. Walter Somersett and Police Chief Hedley are now dead.

—Jim McManus, CBS News, Washington.

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