

Dear Athan,

4/23/84

Please, unless there is a need, do not feel that you must respond if and when I send anything. You have your working day and its requirements, the work you want to do, and you must have had a large correspondence over the Hoover records alone. So please feel no obligation or at all apologetic.

From my own experience, I hope you have a literary agent and that the agent will seek a major publisher who is willing to provide an adequate advance. You'll reach more people through a publisher who will promote the book. The size of the advance indicates the effort he will make. But if you are trying on your own, I suggest you see if Aaron Asher is still at Random House, where he was, I think, chief editor. Believe me, you'll be much better off with an agent. And your book will do better. And you'll not be bothered as you now are.

You have confused the names of two reporters, the late, and I think great, Martin Waldrop with the ultra Frank Waldrop. Quin Shea is still at DJ and a letter there should reach him. His home is 5250 Wild Flower Terrace, Columbia, Md. 21044. I also was surprised when Quin indicated that Waldrop intended a critical examination of Hoover.

The FBI's list of records in its reading room does not include personal records and does not provide you with leads to those who got records on themselves. It also does not include identification of the requester. But those who have such records have an enormity of paper! The FBI decided to help Sanford Ungar, Have you thought of asking him what he may be able to provide?

If you can get an agent who can get a publisher to provide a decent advance you'll be able to afford a research assistant and be able to do much more. May I also suggest that the lawyers of those involved in some of the political cases may be helpful in having had access to the kind of info. you seek?

Lessar has rushed through the reading room copy of the O & C file and sent me a few selections. I'll be writing him about them. Interesting that there is a permanent chargeout for Bobby Kennedy's wiretap approval and that it is withheld because it was disclosed to me yeears ago. Along with relevant memos. This reminds me, when you get to the wiretap material, I have an incredible letter he approved saying that even though it could cost the government much money in an indefensible lawsuit and even though it violated the constitution, the members of the Ray family should be wiretapped. Ramsey Clark refused, they did it anyway, and then they huffed and puffed an indignant withdrawal of the request when they no longer had the need. Also Hoover's praises of those who were arrogant, officious and insubordinate with the AGs...I'll send you a copy of what I write Jim.

If you do not have and want an agent and want some suggestions, I think I can make inquiry for you that may result in some useful suggestions. I know a decent man with a long experience as a lawyer in publishing.

Best wishes,

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April 19, 1984

Mr. Harold Weisberg
7627 Old Receiver Rd.
Frederick, Maryland 21701

Dear Harold:

This is to acknowledge, belatedly I concede with some embarrassment, your various letters of February 7 and 11, 1984 and March 7 and 9, 1984 as well as the various newspaper clippings and copies of your correspondence re your FOIA requests and suit. This has been an impossibly busy semester for me, complicated not only by my efforts to obtain a contract for the Hoover biography but a host of speaking commitments on the 1984 theme. In consequence, I have an overwhelming backlog of correspondence to get to-- and I hope to do so next month after the completion of the spring semester.

I have written your attorney Jim Leshar, responding to one of his letters and I intend to write to Alfred Bernstein. I had known that Frank Waldron intended to do a biography on Hoover, and had thought that Helen Gandy would consent to a series of interviews. I gather that this project was abandoned. If you have Quin Shea's address, I would appreciate receiving it as I would want to contact Shea as a point of entree to Waldron. From Shea, whom I had met when he was with Justice's FOIA-Privacy Appeals office, I had understood that Waldron's work would be critical--I must admit that I was surprised to have learned that, given Waldron's close relationship with the Bureau and political conservatism.

I have only begun to make contacts with individuals and organizations who have received their FBI files and make known my interest in any documents providing insights into Hoover as person and director. I should admit to being humbled by the magnitude of the research project I have initiated-- and as well to the impossibility of conducting all the research which this project calls for, given the scope of the FBI's investigative role and the direct interest which Hoover assumed. To the extent that a definitive biography can be written, I think I can meet that test. By the end of the summer, I shall be in a better position to answer.

On the two matters which you raised--I am willing to defray processing fees, to xerox the documents. Since I want to conserve my limited resources and have a large number of FOIA requests pending, let me ask that you xerox only relevant documents. On Hoover's O&C File on King, I think that you might have the released documents. The King File consists of wiretap and bugging request/authorization memos and as well copies of original reports--I assume that you have seen all of these. The documents do not strike me as particularly revealing, except Hoover's interest in King's activities.

As ever,

