

Harold Weisberg
Rt. 12, Frederick, Md. 21701
7/5/76

Mr. Harry Wachtel
211 Central Park West, Apt. 9F
New York, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Wachtel,

Peter Honercamp lost my address and wrote me through Jim Lesar. Peter included your address so I could write you directly if I want "interviews with black leaders connected with King." This is not precisely what I seek, as I'll explain.

Some months ago Jim told me of his meeting with you and his impression that you appeared to have some uneasiness about me, perhaps my motives. I invite any inquiry you might care to make and will help you with any as much as I can. You will find that I am direct, explicit, try to be informative to where I'm often considered prolix and you will not find anyone who will say to my face that I ~~am~~ ever lied to him. You will find that I have a record for accuracy in fact and in forecast of which I am not ashamed. Of those who live hear you perhaps you know Richard Gallen, who is a lawyer. He lives at 7 W. 81, 4C, phone TR3-9806. On my last two trips to New York I stayed with him. I think he will tell you that in the authentic sense of the word I am the most "conservative" man he has ever met. He was talking about moving his office. His phone there was 753-1713.

My motive is to make the institutions of our society work, my means are to use them to this end, with one method exposure of wrongdoing and malfunction. I have published well over a million words on political assassinations alone without receiving a single complaint from a single person who claimed unfair treatment or factual inaccuracy. Percy Foreman is one of my endorsements: after he read Frame-Up he agreed to appear on WHEW-TV without knowing he was going to confront me. He knew he would appear with Arthur Hanes, Sr. When Foreman did learn, from the make-up man who had made me up for other confrontations of this kind, Foreman fled. Literally. When this happened my two conditions for continuing with the show were met: there be an empty chair on camera for Foreman and the station ~~not~~ announce his departure. The tape shows this.

(It may interest you to know that Hanes admitted he would not get another penny from Hule until Ray was delivered to a United States jail and that he persuaded Ray to abandon his announced appeal from the extradition. The extradition was illegal.)

My ambition is to leave as full and accurate an archive as I can. Aside from what my own work, including personal investigations, have yielded I have what is perhaps the largest private collection of FBI and CIA records there is. In recent years I have not been able to seek foundation support that could make me more efficient and more productive. In earlier years there was too much prejudice against the subject and the work.

My hope is to be able to continue developing and making available what fact I can, to rectify what can be rectified and to effect justice where it remains possible.

Of all the political assassination the one in which a solution does not seem impossible is that of Dr. King. The evidence, especially the official evidence, does not permit the belief that Ray fired the fatal shot. Despite what appeared in the papers Jim Lesar did almost all the legal work, I did all the investigating and together we prepared for the evidentiary hearing beginning prior to the habeas corpus petition, for which I also did the investigating. I evolved one of our approaches to effectiveness of counsel, addressing Percy Foreman's effectiveness in terms of the evidence. I developed the evidence Jim presented that amounts to a total exculpation on the allegations of the State at the guilty-plea hearing. The transcripts will show that in no single case did the State even try to rebut. The FBI was silent when I proved its perjury about the

all-important ballistics evidence, the only pretended direct link between Ray and the crime. More, Jim and I have forced the early retirements of this and three other key FBI agents whose work was pivotal in the JFK and King assassinations.

My interest in Ray is as it would be with a Miranda, in justice. My belief is that in obtaining a trial for him we will make justice work and can force the first official effort to solve the monstrous crime. While there has been virtually no compliance to date with our C.A. 75-1996, for the suppressed FBI evidence in the King assassination and the relevant Departmental records, the yield to date is conclusive: there never was any real investigation and there was a deliberate framing and cover-up. We have been building a record with care and patience. Last Thursday, without a reporter present, the judge issued what I believe is an unprecedented denunciation of the FBI and specifically charged it with covering up what it had to hide. Jim and I agreed to say nothing to the press until after the order is entered. (You may find an evaluation of both of us in our eschewing what from my own reporting background I believe would have made a page-one story.)

Going along with this I have been working on a new book on the King assassination, not on Ray. The draft is completed, except for one part of one chapter, up to the evidence we seek by suit. The book begins with proof that Hoover, through his Cointelpro operations, was directly responsible for Dr. King's presence in Memphis to be killed there. What led to ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ the proof is my analysis of the con job Adams did on the Church committee last November. After I developed the initial proof I interested Les Payne and Newsday. Les developed further proofs. He is a fine reporter and a fine human. We continue to work together. As a black man he has been able to talk to blacks who would not speak to me. He knows all those I want to interview on tape. We discussed this most recently just before Jim received Peter's letter. My reasons for wanting Les in on these interviews are not because he is black or because he is a prized and respected friend or because he knows those I want to interview. It is because when the time comes for the results of those interviews to appear in the papers I want Les to write the stories. He now knows more about the subject than any other reporter and is scrupulously honest.

In these interviews my purposes will be to develop evidence the nature of which I do not want to indicate in advance in order to avoid confabulation. If you desire I will explain this further. At the end of each interview I will surrender the tape or destroy it if the interviewee is not satisfied.

As I remember those I'll want to interview include people with Dr. King, including some from Memphis and at least two members of the press, Earl Caldwell and Ms. Josephine Colfield.

Recently I have heard reports of requests made of Jimmy Carter to recommend a new investigation. I understand that those seeking this include the father, the widow and Congressman Young. If anything comes of this effort success in the end will require more than the FBI will part with voluntarily and quite likely what it does not even have. It will also require that there be no control on or influence over the investigation by those who are involved in the case in the past, with the possible exception of Ramsey Clark, who did not respond to my letters after he left the government. If this belief requires explanation, I will take the time for it.

What I am suing for is the essential evidence of the crime insofar as the government has it. This includes everything from the Cointelpro Memphis operation to the scientific tests. This effort can be helped by lawyers helping Jim, who is overloaded and like me, of insignificant income. He is his own typist. It can also be helped by other efforts we plan ranging from obtaining the records of the spook interest in my work and me to claims for damages from it and this stonewalling. The records I have already obtained reflect a CIA interest in my book on the King assassination. Having established this we filed an FOIA request with the CIA asking for all it has relevant to the King assassination. CIA records I did not obtain from it make errors and use language faithfully dupli-

cated by the State during the recent proceedings in Memphis. While I do not expect either the FBI or the CIA to acknowledge intrusion into my first-amendment rights I do expect to prove it in court and have some proofs now. In combination I believe all of this will help do something about the King assassination and official wrongdoing in connection with it as distinguished from Hoover's indecent treatment of Dr. King.

I am certain I know how the crime was committed and that the FBI knows in addition by whom but lacks proof it can use in court. If there is less certainty about who was behind it there is reason to believe it was a contract job involving an organized criminal element. Some of the evidence I have is duplicated, coming independently from different sources.

The FBI and not it alone knew the crime could not have been committed as officially alleged. It knew this from the first, despite all the contrary public statements to the present.

If anything comes of the so-called Levi investigation by the Office of Professional responsibility heavy pressure alone will cause it. Jim and I are applying all the pressure we responsibly can. I have filed charges with it against one FBI agent via Kelley, who has been silent. We expect an order from the judge that will include a motion to compel compliance by the OPR itself. Shaheen is the former law clerk of the judge who presided over the evidentiary hearing. Shaheen has let it be known that he expects to practise law in Memphis in a couple of years.

If there are problems I believe the probability of success is very good. The problems range from the power of those against whom we are contesting to my age and health and, of course, the limitations impose on two men in the condition in which Jim and I must work.

I am a pretty vigorous 63. I began work at 5 a.m. this morning. However, last October a severe phlebitis condition was not diagnosed until the damage was permanent. I live with the limitations this imposes. Having no choice I mow my own grass. I walk long distances and I travel when it is necessary. I do not feel as though I am about to come apart and I do not live that way.

I have tried to be informative and to anticipate what you might want to know. If you have any questions, please ask them.

Whether or not any help of any kind is offered in the future, I will continue this work. It does, however, have a better prospect if it is joined by those who would be their brothers' keepers.

Best wishes,

Harold Weisberg

cc: Jim Lesar, Peter Honerkamp