

Mr. George Herman
CBS News
2020 M St., NW
Washington, D.C. 20036

5/14/83 *John Heron Bell*
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Dear George,

Because I've not been able to drive to Washington for years, can't safely use Greyhound any more and have no one to ~~BE~~ drive me there except for medical purposes, surgical checkup every six weeks, and because I can't afford long distance charges from \$375 Social Security, I'm writing a few reporters about the possibility of being charged with contempt in defense of FOIA.

I don't expect anyone to fight the FBI but I am hoping that some practical suggestions may result.

My few references to them in the enclosed copy do not begin to indicate the range of what the FBI tried to do to me. The two I like best are two efforts to ruin me on talk shows, one on TV in NYC and one on the CBS radio station in San Francisco when it was all talk and had a vast audience. I didn't know that they were FBI operations at the time (1966) but the first made my first book a best seller in NYC the week there wasn't a copy to be had and I had to rush copies there and the second sold out all copies of my first two books in the Bay area overnight. As you can gather, it didn't work out as the FBI anticipated!

When I learned of the scheme to "stop" me by the FBI filing a spurious libel suit against me in the name of one of the agents who was a liaison with the Warren Commission I was deposing him in an FOIA case. I didn't interrupt them to challenge him, but after the deposition was over I told the FBI lawyer and the assistant United States attorney who were representing the FBI that I'd give them a written waiver of the statute of limitations if he they'd dare file that suit. They didn't take me up. Later that monster had the gall to demand an extra "expert witness" fee, in addition to the standard and prepaid witness fees. I gave him the same offer and added the promise to pay his filing fees. He never responded.

While I hate fighting, when principle is involved there is no real choice.

Now that I'm 70 and limited in what I am able to do and have less time for it, I still can't take the easier choice.

Don't get the idea that I'm unhappy or anything like that. I'm enjoying life as I didn't for years. I have to spend three hours daily in the best kind of therapy, walking at a local mall, where I can sit and elevate the damaged leg whenever it is necessary. I carry a book and read for pleasure, not work, each rest period, and I'm enjoying it very much. Since the surgeries, for the first time since before World War II, I'm taking in baseball and football games. Well, not quite that. I'm an Orioles and Redskins fan, as is my wife. We try not to miss any of the broadcasts. (I can't go to movies, lectures, concerts or play, but with the sports and good radio reception, I don't miss them that much.) I split and saw wood sitting down, and that gives me some exercise. In fact, my contribution to the energy crisis was heating us entirely with wood, and I stack, restack and handle all of it that goes into the stove.

And I have what is so important, the feeling that I've done a worthwhile work and done it fairly well, including what others have not done.

About this, an ancient Roman wrote that history writes truth. I'm content with that.

And I still try to do what I can, albeit not 20 hours a day any more.

Sorry you never saw what it amounts to.

Best wishes,

Harold Weisberg