

Et 12 now, they've renumbered again  
8/22/75

Dear Jimmy,

I've been staying too busy on too many other things to have kept in touch when there was no special purpose.

I have to make an unexpected trip to Washington, when I'll see Jim. I'll send this through him because I want ~~to~~ him to know my feelings. We had discussed this generally earlier, when Jim told me that Ernie Lesler had sent me a copy of his August 18 letter to you. It went to Indianapolis first. I just got it today.

Several CBS researchers have spent some time with me. Mr. Leiser was due here this week. Maybe he'll come next week. If he does and is interested in what I'm telling you I'll tell him. Only I'll tell him more than I now have time for.

You know that under some conditions I have been all for your seeing members of the media and under others I've been strongly opposed to it. I have been for it for special reasons and at special times. Your interests do change with changing situations. Right now I think you should grant no interviews on anything. You can't gain by it and through accident or inadv~~er~~stence can lose.

Lesler wants to interview, in the case on which he is specific, an exactly what Bud mixed. It would therefore be quite discriminatory and potentially hurtful to you to grant this interview to another. In ~~my~~ my view when Bud objected he was wrong but you know we all went along with him.

Other than this one the only interviews I have encouraged you to grant had to do with the conditions of your confinement. These seem to have changed. The reasons for this exception no longer exist.

There is something special and different about TV interviews other than when there is a safe format, like in-jail conditions and nothing else. Period. Nobody has any control over them.

It is necessary for TV to film more than they can use. Some doesn't turn out good, some is unclear, etc. They also have to be able to make choices. So, it is inevitable that any such interview, aside from whether or not it now is wise to begin with, is not under your or our control but is under theirs and they have special needs that do not coincide with yours.

They can use less than a minute of a half-hour filming. Or none. But the film kicks around.

Your present situation is one in which the tube is immaterial anyway. You do not now have public-relations needs.

I would not be honest with you if I did not tell you more about CBS. Before telling you this I also want you to know that I have spoken honestly and as fully as they wanted with CBS researchers, some off the record, to be as helpful to them as possible for CBS's understanding and information. If he comes I will also be honest with Leiser.

He was part of a four-part series back in 1967. The dishonesty of it is beyond my capacity to explain in few words. It was a deliberate dishonesty, it was a policy dishonesty and if there has been any change, fine. But because there is no benefit to you in being on in ~~the~~ person why run any chance? This is not a personal reflection on Leiser, I've never met him. He did not control in 1967 and don't believe anybody who may tell you he controls today. (He just returned there from ABC.)

There remains plenty of time. If you have any questions, ask them. Best regards

Harold Weisberg

# CBS NEWS

A Division of CBS Inc.  
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Dear Mr. Ray:

August 18, 1975

As your attorneys may have informed you, CBS News is preparing a major documentary program, or programs, to be broadcast this fall, taking a fresh, new look at the assassinations of President Kennedy, Senator Robert Kennedy, Dr. Martin Luther King and the attempt on the life of Governor George Wallace.

The project is being undertaken because new information has arisen in each case and new voices have spoken up to question the original verdict in each case.

I have been assigned as the producer in charge of the segment to be done on the death of Dr. King.

As part of this program, we would very much like to arrange an interview with you by CBS News Correspondent Dan Rather, who will be the anchorman of the program or series of programs. Obviously, the interview would be contingent on permission by the prison warden; and I know you would want to consult your attorneys.

In conversations with Mr. Lesar, he has indicated he would be unwilling to have you answer questions which might prejudice an ultimate new trial. I fully understand that point of view and we would be willing to forego any line of interrogation which might affect what will be an ultimate defense.

However, it seems to me there are questions which you properly can answer, in fact have answered in evidentiary testimony and written deposition, but which would be more effective in our report if they came from you, rather than lawyers. One such key question is, "If you did not kill Dr. King, why did you plead guilty to having done so?".

I am sending copies of this letter to your attorneys and we will await word from you, either directly or through them.

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I hope you will find it in your interest as well as that of getting at the truth in this case to agree to a filmed interview.

Yours truly,



Ernest Leiser  
Senior Producer  
CBS News Special Reports

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ESL:mlm

cc: Mr. Robert I. Livingston  
Mr. James Lesar  
Mr. Bernard Fensterwald  
Mr. Harold Weisberg