

1/3/76

Ms. Esther Kartiganer
CBS News
524 W 57 St.,
New York, N.Y. 10019

Dear Esther,

Now that your ~~show~~^{show} has been aired I am willing to discuss with you what you found incomprehensible about my refusing to be on it after agreeing. I think it might be helpful to you to understand not only the immediate reasons but what I regard as subsequent vindication. I'll be surprised if the last segment does not include CBS' abandonment of its own "expert."

If the "assistant producer" in the credits is a promotion (you described yourself as researcher), congratulations. In hard work alone you deserve it. Now that there is no possibility of ulterior motive, I owe you a compliment. I have been interviewed by many people of different natures and methods and under a fairly wide range of conditions. I also remember your air-conditioner problems and the interruptions this alone caused. I don't remember any one who maintained as full and complete control of what he or (uncommonly) she had in mind. It did impress me.

Except for some new papers Jimmy Ray refers to in a letter I received from him this morning I have read all the filings of all sides in the Tennessee suit and am responsible for some. While I am and remain tired (for me, anyway) I think I have a good enough recollection and I'll never forget the initial cause of my immediate reaction.

You may get a vacation or do other work now. I'll be busy at least until the week beginning the 19th. However, if you are going to be in Washington thereafter and can let me know perhaps I can arrange some of the many things I always have to do there (and never have time for) to coincide. As of now I'm still not able to drive both ways so I use the very poor bus service. This gets me there too early to do anything unless I have a 9 a.m. doctor's appointment. There will be one about that time but I have no idea when in the day. Rarely is it 9. Actually, it is not that I am not able to drive this much. Rather is it that the healing of the phlebitis in both legs has not proceeded to the point where I can keep them pendant so long. I've done it once only since I left the hospital and had to lie down as soon as I got to Jim's. By the time I was home it took 3-4 days to ~~make~~ get back to where I was before driving. Most of my travelling has been with fine college students providing transportation. (In airing him on Face the Nation CBS refused to use what I reported in advance, that Belin's self-serving formulation of a demand for a new JFK assassination was by no means ~~spontaneous~~ spontaneous. I caused if not forced it. If the details interest you, which I doubt, I'll be glad to give you them and if it serves future use, the proofs.) As of then air travel was still a bit much. I had to be helped back and, fortunately, one of these young college friends had insisted on accompanying me. I'll find out if air travel has any effect in less than two weeks when I do it again.

I am not forcing this, so please do not take it that way. With all I have to do and can't get to I'd not be writing you to argue, either. I am by no means out of sympathy with any writer's desire for evidence and I don't know of any who has fought and is fighting as many battles to get it. But there is a right way and a wrong way. There are other rights. We all have them and we none have the right to deny those of others. Moreover, TV is the major influence on what people do and can know, and that is the way representative society works. What I think you do not know is that before I knew of you another in CBS, above you, was in touch with me on this question and I expressed a general willingness to help in the right way. I have had more experience in some aspects of this than anyone of whom I know. Once I expressed this willingness I never heard another word. It was not on the King part, so ordinarily you would have no need to know.

This general comment is not intended to be insulting. TV has become so rich and powerful and has in addition gotten ~~xx~~ away with so much more mortal would have to pay for that while it has been able to buy the best of brains it still depends not on brains but on its wealth and power and what people are willing to do as a result.

So, for the future, perhaps my own experiences can be of help to you. Not so much for you personally is a current example of this, the Angola mercenaries. If there were a TV reporter, I know who is not in another part of that vast machinery I could have and would have provided good solid sources immediately. If one lacks wealthy and power he has to go about his work on an entirely different basis. And if one does not depend on the favor of officials, he has to develop other means and other sources.

Either way is OK with me. If you want to do what you said you do, I'm willing. If you have changed your mind or your work makes it impossible, OK too.

Going back to a question I once asked you, I want to repeat and add to it as a result of what was aired. I had asked you for a statement of what you were given access to and copies of by various officials, in each case what was denied the defense and in some cases despite court orders. We still need this for the defense and I do not see any question of confidentiality. If CBS is serious about its conclusion, there is the forum it did not mention, the courts. It can carry its own conclusions to meaningfulness by letting me (or Jim) have what to us will be evidence we can and will use to the end CBS says it wants. What I remember mentioning is the autopsy pictures. There may have been more of this kind of evidence that we were denied in Memphis.

Rather said only that you had obtained one document "under the Freedom of Information law." I gave you what I had then obtained and you had not and I don't know if this is one. But I do presume you and your associates have a sincere interest in the FOIA as well as the conclusion of last night's show, so I'll appreciate reciprocation, giving me what you got that was not included in what I gave you, plus a copy of your request because whether or not you realize it, my effort began in 1969, was formalized 4/15/75, was appealed 5/5/75, and while I do not recall the exact date I filed in court, you did not get anything until after I filed. Then it was given to you the day before they even wrote Jim. You expressed no interest in any pictures I did not show so I do not know what of these you got.

The Government has stonewalled since. So, aside from correspondence we are filing interrogatories (before you can respond unless Jim's one-day virus last longer).

Of course I'd appreciate a transcript. But there are several segments where I'm sure you have more than you aired and of these transcripts and/or sound tapes could be helpful. One is Ghormley. Despite what you aired and of which they learned at the evidentiary hearing, there is no reference to Ghormley in Hanes notes "im or I recall. I told you the story of my holding back on him and why. What you aired is not consistent with his evidentiary-hearing testimony. Therefore, in helping along a court investigation, which is a kind of independent investigation, the full thing could be helpful. Here I ask for the police and sheriff's tapes and/or transcripts because although those of the sheriff were promised they were never delivered. I don't recall if we asked for those of the police.

The full text of the Stephens interview and the date will be very helpful both to the defense and any investigation. The date also is important.

There may be many other items of this sort where you do not have a confidentiality problem that could serve the same purposes and would be welcome.

The fragment of bullet, as best I could make it out without color, seemed to be in three parts. When I examined it there was a loose piece of core in the remnant of casing only.

Thanks for anything you can do.

Sincerely,
Harold Weisberg