

Memphis and the House committee

HM 11/22/76

Wayne Chastain phoned last night while I was meeting with Jean-Michel Charlier. Wayne was wound up and did not want to discontinue even after a number of hints and suggestions that we were repeating ourselves.

His law business is bad, he has applied to the committee for a job and he has information about the destroyed intelligence-unit files that I have not seen in print. He is still preoccupied with the peripheral but he has returned to work on his back. He has an agent and some hopes. He is revising the last 100 pages of the memo or the last chapter. I do not recall which. It is hooky enough to go.

He says that Lane also interviewed Richmond.

Wayne's story of what Richmond told him is that Richmond was not at the "command post" the day of the King assassination and that Richmond insists he was not regardless of what anyone else says. He says he was at HQ when Redditt was there.

Wayne says Redditt told him the real reason Redditt left the police is its racism and its intelligence excesses. Wayne says there were several hundred files, all card indexed, and that all were destroyed. He says these excesses increased greatly after the King assassination, somewhat before, too, with added intelligence-unit preoccupation with the agitation-workers strike. He appears not to have realized the import of his statement that there were only five members to that unit, perhaps he said six. All those files with so few police mean extensive informant sources.

Wayne says the FBI was covering King but not the day of the crime. He is intense on this, I presume in the Lane-improvisation sense, that they, too, removed all coverage because they, too, knew King was to be killed. However, although I did not argue with him, all coverage was not removed. Kay told me of her being at the mt hall where King was to have spoken with FBI agents she knew and with whom she chatted.

He says he has chatted with committee Member Harold Ford and that Ford, who sponsored a sunshine law in the State legislature is considering resigning from the committee. Wayne does not attribute this to the committee's charges against Memphis but to the committee's sitting in executive session. He opposes this.

He has a Texas source who indicates LBJ has some unclear JFK involvement. He seems to keep going for this kind of stuff.

He was unreceptive to my suggestion that before it explores any of the peripheral or conjectural the committee ought establish the basic facts of the crime. He says all possibilities should be explored first. I asked him why waste time on the impossible without reaching his thinking.

Consistent with this and with unnecessary ellipsis Robert Groden told me this morning that he had been off on a short trip. By questioning with the kind of ellipsis he uses I established that this has to do with the Oswald-Lovelady shirt, my work after Carliss Lamont's original interest fostered through Lane and leading to nothing. While this, I think, is something the committee should look into, whether or not it is now a priority item for it it has again remained away from the primary source. It is I who opened up the Martin and other DCA film, got the description of the shirt from Mrs. Lovelady and got CBS, through Bob Richter, to photograph Lovelady in that shirt. There is what is relevant that the committee does not have simply because it is avoiding the original sources and the other relevant work it does not have. It did this with Robert even after his excesses in interpreting the film forced Sprague to discuss him at that executive session. He acknowledges that this happened but calls it less than being discussed.