

5/27/76

Senator Richard Schweiker
Senate Office Bldg.,
Wash., D.C. 20510

Dear Dick,

Had your yesterday's brief note, crossed mine of early this morning I'd have written you again today for reasons that follow. I'm glad to get your note. It tells me you have not misread my purposes, regardless of how in the ever-present pressure of working alone I may have expressed myself.

Please do not understand when I say that my writing you at all means that I have faith in your intentions and sincerity. I've had to reorganize my entire life since you saw me. If I outwork any kid of whom I know I still work less than I want to. Each thing I do therefore is at the cost of something I may not do when there is no time for what I want to do.

Early each morning I walk as much as I am able to. This varies day to day. It is my second break for thinking. The first is while I wash and shave. In between these today I wrote you. While I was walking and thinking a no-lose way for you to test what I recommended you in October and again this morning came to mind. You'll lose nothing if it doesn't work and can do much if it does. It is a variant of the proposal I made to Dave if not to you: putting several FBI agents and me simultaneously under oath and the penalties of perjury. You apparently did not want to do that, although I'll still welcome and favor it.

Get a fair selection of the other side and me together, with a dependable tape recorder if not a court reporter, and ask what you regard as the basic questions having to do with a homicide, any homicide but remembering that this was the homicide of the chief of state. Knowing some of the other characters as I do I suggest there be some ground rules, like a time limitation of 3-5 minutes for response. Let each one answer each question or refuse to. Let the record show if any you invite decline to appear.

I'll be surprised if you do not get refusals. Specter must have declined 25 in Philadelphia alone in the early years. When he was exploring his Commission work in the recent campaign and I wrote him a challenge he refused to accept a certified letter that remains unopened. I don't think Howard Willens will again confront anyone who knows the fact. His one leaving of his shell was against me last year. I asked Slawson to arrange a debate on his own campus and with his own moderator and received no answer. There are other cases with which I need not take your time except to note that I am certain I forced Belin to his self-serving call for a new investigation, within less than three days of that effort.

I recommend Specter, Belin, Laebeler and/or Jenner, Slawson (it would probably be inappropriate to ask a cabinet member) and Rankin. If you want Willens because he was Justice liaison and there thus is his responsibility for what the FBI did not do. (He also was then still on the Justice payroll and he personally ended the indexing of the Commission's files.)

Do not fear. I can hold my own with all of these, tired as I am and much as I have forgotten. But if you have apprehension, you have a young constituent I recommend, Howard Roffman. Specter recently refused to debate him at Princeton.

They will not satisfy on the simple, basic questions, of the crime itself and on the performance of the executive agencies. If you limit it to one against them you will have more drama, more impact. You could come out with enough for what I'd prefer if that interests you, a continuation of your committee with a new member for this job, which is too much for a subsidiary function of another committee. You may recall that

this was my hope of last October. I tell you now, if elliptically, what I did not then, is you destroy the official solution publicly you will have powerful support you may not suspect.

At the very least you will wind up with a transcript that will be quite a document no matter how it is used and if not used a historical record of importance.

Test me any way you want on this, without notice and at any time of your selection that does not coincide with my needs to be in court. As of now these are only this coming Thursday and the following Friday. I do not expect a further medical appointment after that of this coming ¹⁹⁵⁵ Monday, if you have this by then.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg