

Mr. Richard Curtis  
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11/19/76

Dear Dick,

When I got home from Washington yesterday I had more than a thousand formerly secret pages of FBI records and a court order issued against the CIA with me. Your letter of the 16th improved that much for me. Thanks.

If Zebra understands that the really new stuff, what is exculpatory of Ray being least significant about it, has yet to come I think it will be better. I can show some of it because I have enough in hand. If you saw an AP story yesterday on the supposed release of some 442 pages, that is my suit, typically not mentioned by the wire services. I'll include a copy to show how they miss the significant and go for the tinsel. In time it will be known how all this is coming about - and it is NOT from the House investigation committee - perhaps when the judge issues an order against DJ and FBI. We expect it pretty soon, after a current trial.

They can make any reasonable changes in the first part if they are interested, as long as the essence for historical record remains.

If they are interested and will talk in real numbers I'll drop everything else and finish the draft. I have already been thinking of making changes in what I do to be able to get other work done. I've been in court a dozen times to get this King material and many times on other cases. There will be more cases filed soon. It may be that I won't be there and will leave it all to my lawyer, Jim Lesar.

If you have any need to be in touch with him his office is 910 16 St., NW, Wash., D.C. 20006, 202/223-5587. My phone is 301/473-~~8186~~ 8186.

You are correct on AGENT OSWALD. What I sent is only the sample chapters of years ago, as an indication of what could be. I hope it is still that because this is a breaking story and you'll see that virtually all that has come out and is breaking is or is from my work. Last weekend's FBI leak to the Washington Post, which received nationwide, sensational treatment, is partly in my OSWALD IN NEW ORLEANS of more than nine years ago. This leak was an official disinformation operation aimed at the new committee. I fear it needs no such misdirection and boxing in from my contacts with it.

Because I believe it is necessary to inform you, not only with regard to Zebra, here is a brief update.

I spent last week at the University of Wisconsin (Stevens Point) conducting seminars and making nightly speeches. It went well. I began the deposit of archival materials there. The chancellor seemed quite impressed. He expressed a willingness to seek foundation support. If this comes to anything it will be for the state-wide university system, which is quite prestigious in history. They have begun with extensive videotaping and audio cassettes to be distributed to the schools of the state, a first in the field. This also represents a distinction from almost all the others, whose work is not scholarly or dependable enough for educational and historical purposes.

Prior to leaving I precipitated a real hassle with the new House investigating committee because it was off and running on a very bad business with James Earl Ray. Their prosecutor types were about to barge in on him on a silly adventure that would have been hurtful to his rights in court and would have aborted their own work if serious. Jim Lesar agreed. We tangled with their new chief counsel, his assistant and their former DJ man who is in charge of the King part of their investigation. They backed off, verbally and in writing. I have retrieved the 14 volumes of materials I loaned them. We met with their chief counsel and a staff aide Wednesday afternoon. They gave us assurances in which we have no faith. We'll see about the future. However, they begin with part of the raw materials for the draft you have. What else I let them have depends on the record they will make. As of now perhaps no more voluntarily. Perhaps not ever but certainly not until



they show responsibility. To date they have not. Their claim that records were destroyed to deny them to the House is false. They were not records of the King assassination and they were destroyed for other purposes, as we told Sprague, their chief counsel Wednesday afternoon.

In terms of the book and promotion of the book this is a no-lose situation. Whatever this committee does it will come from my work, Frame-Up and the work represented by The King Conspiracies, plus the current ~~litigation~~ litigation, C.A.75-1996. In that the judge has already said this in quotable ways and I have the transcripts. The natural ~~jump~~ jump from the book is the book that did it all, while the story is breaking in the coming two years.

Going along with this the Hurek agency is going to book me. A go-getter businessman, Leo Hensel, has taken it over, beginning with the theatrical part. The Russians love him for what he has done for their artists. He is about to go there for another two weeks. I saw him yesterday. Jim Lesar is one of his lawyers. He told me he is booking me on colleges this coming season and will be working this out with me after he returns from Russia.

Mark Lane has already stolen some of my work and that of a colleague to whom I gave some without surrendering my rights. He got Dick Gregory to agree to put his name on the cover and with this got a nice advance from Prentiss-Hall. I had to put P-H on notice. They appear to be taking it seriously from their response. I've given them some indication and offered them all the proof they want via Jim Lesar, to whom I turned all this over day before yesterday. He is concerned for other reasons, too. Because of the most serious unethical conduct it is necessary to make charges against Lane with the New York bar. If I detest this kind of distraction it is a must for the reasons that will be stated in the next few days. There will be other reasons but those stated are real and what requires that this be done. He has abused Ray and violated basic ethics to do it. Jim is still Ray's only counsel of record and I am still his only investigator.

Your reflection of the current publisher attitude toward serious work is exactly what I have found for 13 years. The real trouble is that with one exception only there has been no publisher effort with any serious, responsible work. There is a good market for good work and good work can be as excitingly promoted. They just have neither tried nor learned. It should be obvious from normal business concepts that the combination of the existence of this new official investigating committee and my work and their dependence on it is as commercial as anything can be while it is strictly legitimate. Perhaps this is foreign to most publishers. I hope Zebra can see it because they do a good job with promotions. Fensterwald told them they'd be crazy to deal with anyone other than me for these and other reasons even though he and I do not get along because of his irresponsibilities. They wanted him to do this book. He was Ray's chief counsel but he can't do the book. Lesar is the only other one who can and he won't. He is just getting on his legal feet. Remember for the future, though, that he is a fine writer.

Let me think out loud with you for a moment. If I get a really good advance from Zebra or anyone else I'll use it not for personal reasons but to be more productive. I'll try to hire an assistant with it. If I can avoid having to do such things as my own filing and my own searching of files I can read rough drafts out pretty fast. I do not know what help may be available. I have a young man in mind who has applied to the new committee for a job. If he does not get it and I can make him an offer I will. He has prior experience in this field and as an investigator for a public-defender's office. If the advance then permits it I'd also arrange for a good local typist for when my wife can't retype my drafts. She is an excellent tax consultant and that season is about to begin.

I do use what I make these ways anyway. I've already given Lesar the honorarium I've received to pay for the xeroxes I'm getting from the FBI on King. Howard Bray gave me a little help and I've spent that with the CIA.

Many other matters are on my mind. I hope this is comprehensible. I appreciate your straightforwardness and the nice things you said. Sincerely,





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November 16, 1976

Dear Harold:

It took me a while to get through the remarkable and abundant material you sent me, and then a bit longer to get in touch with the Zebra people -- I know them well, having sold them many things.

They're now reading the King assassination material, and the books you published privately, and are extremely interested in all of them. I'll be in touch with you about them presently. Aside from them, I have to say the market for the material isn't as strong as I'd hoped, due to overexposure. Ironically, it doesn't seem to be important what the truth is; publishers are more interested in whether previous books have covered the market. My inquiries around the market indicate considerable apathy right now, so we may have an uphill struggle.

In any event I'll do my best and perhaps we'll need go no further than Zebra. I take my hat off to you on your magnificent work.

The other stuff you sent me, including AGENT OSWALD etc. is fascinating but I guess it needs further development or updating before I'll be able to handle it properly.

I'd like to have your phone number --



I seem to have misplaced it -- whenever  
you can drop me a line.

All the best.

Handwritten signature or initials, possibly 'D' followed by a horizontal line.

ps

I'm returning that other material under  
separate cover.