

4/23/71

Congressman Hale Boggs
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

Dear Congressman Boggs,

Your speech of yesterday was so good, so principled, that I write because of reaction I anticipate and certain new hazards of which I think you may not be aware. I presume you have not read my work, but I assure you that you said not only what I've been saying, but in some cases used almost identical language. Strong as you may consider your remarks were, I believe you will yet learn they are an understatement.

If I have no way of knowing what the reaction of concerned Americans has been, I would hazard a guess that you have had an considerable volume of mail approving your position and what today must be regarded as exemplary political courage.

Among these I would expect some to have been from the small band of us who are deeply concerned about the political assassinations and their effect on our society, its institutions and, indeed, its integrity (this was my subject when I enjoyed the attentions of Army intelligence). As the senior in years as well as experience, as the one who has done no other work since John Kennedy was assassinated, as the author of the first and most of the serious books on the subject, and as the one who I think I can quite safely say has done considerably more original work, in both investigation and research than any other, I believe I can speak with both candor and knowledge about us. I offer this unsolicited advice on the assumption that I am not alone in having offered to help you.

All are serious, well-intentioned and deeply concerned. Most are under-informed, partly because of the complexity and enormity of the material, partly because they have other, often full-time obligations, sometimes because they begin with preconceptions and confabulate to accredit their preconceptions. A small fraction of quite decent, intelligent people on this subject come close to paranoia—and are persuasive to the uninformed.

I do hope you will interest yourself, despite the problems it will present, in that of which I wrote you on two occasions, what Hoover and the FBI did to you and the Warren Commission, how they deceived and misrepresented, lied and suppressed. But I also, and strongly, encourage you to the utmost caution and above all to the most severe testing of all information, regardless of source, whether or not you use it in public. There are very, very few people capable of doing this for you. Others may, with utmost sincerity, believe they can, but this is their belief because they are unaware of what they do not know. And, there is always the possibility of innocent error, to which none are immune.

There are some things that set me apart from the so-called "critics" and all the others who have written books. I regret very much that you appear not to have read my first. When I got no reaction, not even acknowledgement, from you, I did not trouble you with the others as they appeared. But the very first thing I did in it (and I am confident it is in no other critical writing), is to put the members of the Commission as distinguished from their staff in what I regarded then and regard now as proper perspective. This was no problem for me, for I had Hill experience as a young man, on a Senate committee. I regarded and still

regard the members of the Commission as among the victims of the assassination, wrote this and reached a much larger number of people in radio and TV appearances in which I not only so stated but often argued with those believing otherwise. If I am a minority of one, I believe with Jackson and feel that ultimately you will agree with me. You had little more freedom than a ringed bull. One of the things I offered to show you will tell you what happened when you attempted to assert independent opinions and influence the ultimate conclusions. This is what so shocked Senator Russell, as I think it will you.

The title of my second book charges a coverup against the FBI, and that dates to 1966, rather early in this subject. My third book is devoted to showing how the FBI denied you the available photographic evidence, how it misrepresented and lied to you, and is the first with extensive, facsimile reproduction of the unpublished documents that no member could possibly have had time to read. The fourth tells a similar story about Oswald in New Orleans, the FBI hiding and misrepresenting, again the withholding of the evidence the members should have had and couldn't have. (It is independent of Garrison, was almost completed before he first spoke, and does have a perceptive introduction he supplied the publisher.)

I think you will find that my writing, in volume at least greater than all other serious writing in the field, is really a study of the FBI. I enclose two reviews of my most recent work, a study of the assassination of Dr. King, of which the same is true. The trade press review says it is "pure TNT", among other things, for its "sensational head-on assault on J. Edgar Hoover". (I have marked this passage.)

Yet it would be an over-simplification to attribute all of this to the FBI. You had an experienced staff, whether or not they had full independence from the executive branch, and they owed you and the country a performance they did not render. I can show you prima facie cases of the suborning of perjury, altered testimony, to hide fact and to hide and protect perjury, of aborted investigations that were vital. One of the best of us is now completing a long study of one aspect of this. Can you believe you never had all the FBI information on Oswald and that among the things they withheld from you is copies of their pre-assassination investigation of him? (We got copies, as your staff, in silence, did, from the files of another agency.)

You may recall that you were responsible for hiring Leon Hubert because of his knowledge of New Orleans, a valid reason, and he certainly had the connections and the experience. Are you aware that when he was hired for this reason, he was promptly excluded from that area of the work, so completely that some of the information given him is not in the residual files? I am familiar with your explanations in the executive sessions, most of which I have studied closely. I have a large part of a manuscript on them completed. (Some are still suppressed, I am confident in many cases for spurious reasons, and have no doubt that given the opportunity I can prove it.) I was also told about this information by one of Mr. Hubert's sources. I cannot find it in your files.

While there is much evidence I have I feel it would be premature to use at this point, there is much more of which this is not true, and you are welcome to both kinds. Of those things that I think should not be used until I have completed my work with them and they are in a proper context, four items would take no more than 15 minutes of the time of your administrative assistant. Two are files I have obtained that were denied you. If you had had them you could not and would not have signed that Report. And two show what was done to you. One of these is what so stunned Senator Russell. When he saw that he felt he had to see no more. You may recall a change in him about the time he resigned his chairmanship.

You may also recall that Senator Russell made public comment not consistent with the Report. Neither then nor on his death did I make any comment. Nor will I, now that he is dead, until my writing progresses to the point where I can use it in the context in which he presented his beliefs to me. Anything else would be unfair to him. I tell you this in an effort to encourage you to consider that I seek no selfish end in the offers I make to you. Inquiry at my bank (Farmers' and Mechanics') will disclose that I do not do this work for personal gain, for there has been none, quite the opposite.

These four things I mention above are easy for me to carry, will take little time for your AE to examine (or your lawyer son, should you prefer that) and I think will illuminate all of this for you as nothing else and nobody else can.

In return, I ask nothing but the preservation of my confidence. This is not to say that I would not welcome any understanding you could give me, or any information, whether or not for later publication, but it is to say that I do not expect anything in return. You have come to the point where you are now saying what I have been long saying. Your voice is heard, it carries authority, and I consider it my obligation to help in any way possible.

Should you want to carry this further, I can do such things as take you to New Orleans witnesses who were threatened by the FBI, who will tell you what was expunged from your testimony about the FBI, and all in a comprehensible context of deceiving you and performing the conclusions you could reach. I can show you some of the New Orleans evidence withheld from you by the FBI, much that they bobtailed and misrepresented to you. I can do this for other than New Orleans evidence, but that is your home area, so I specify it.

It will surprise me if an effort is not made to retaliate. If and when that time comes, I think I can help you, immediately and in a manner that should out the FBI, which really means Hoover, and his collaborators both on the defensive and in an untenable position.

Whether or not this interests you, whether or not you accept my offers, I must again express the appreciate I think the entire country owes you for this valiant effort to restore our stolen freedoms (it is not alone members of Congress who have been the victims) and to inform the people of what has been and is happening to our country, what it has meant and what worse it can yet mean.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg