

Ms. Nicole Martin, Library
Hood College
Rossmont Ave.,
Frederick, MD 21701

9/1/95

Dear Nicole,

The possible honors paper subject ^{that} could not remember has come to ^{think} mind. I think this it would be particularly appropriate now that Hood has declared this the years of justice, especially for political science, law and society and history students.

What I have in mind is a study based on the two weeks of evidentiary hearing at which James Earl Ray sought the trial he has never had although charged with one of the most serious crimes of the century.

There came a time when I was able to get him to ask counsel whose agreement I had already obtained to represent him. I conducted the successful investigation for the habeas corpus proceeding and for the two weeks of the evidentiary hearing in federal district court in Memphis. (This is how, of all things, I got into at least six FBI bank robbery files!)

All the preparations for those hearings and almost all the work at them^{se} feel to Jim Lesar, who then had never appeared before a jury and although licensed as a Wisconsin lawyer on graduation had not even ~~the~~ taken the DW bar exams, and to me. We divided it with him taking the law and I the fact.

I do have the transcripts of those hearings and some of what we obtained under discovery. In form it was a civil case. I do not have all the exhibits. Lesar does.

What I have in mind is not reviewing the King assassination but a study of how the system of justice worked and did not work on so serious crime.

Ray's effort was based on the allegations that he had not had the effective assistance of counsel and that ^{his} the plea was not voluntary but was coerced. ^{his} the counsel had been the country's then most famous and successful criminal lawyer, the late Percy Foreman. How does one prove that the best criminal lawyer in the country did not even try to do well for Ray? That fell to me and I decided that the way to do it was to present the case against ^{the} Ray and the disproof of it. That is what we did with the witnesses I located and prepared. In his decision the judge held, contrary to all the evidence, that guilt or innocence were not before him and that Ray had had the effective assistance of counsel and had made his plea voluntarily and knowingly.

There is quite a bit on this that I have and that Hood will have besides those hearings. I believe that with an able student this could easily make a book for which there can be a market although not a sensational one. Or that a student's work could later be expanded into a book with the materials I have.

It would probably bring some new information on the King assassination to light.

Best,

Harold
Harold Weisberg