

Rt. 12, Frederick, Md. 21701
2/14/77

Congressman Henry Gonzalez
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

Dear Congressman Gonzalez,

On America's Black Forum aired yesterday you were asked if people like Mark Lane and I might not be of help to your committee. While I cannot be verbatim without a transcript the sense of your response was that Lane and I had reached and published conclusions about who committed the two assassinations.

With regard to Lane this is true. He has blamed a wide variety, all of whom he claims are the assassins. This includes both the CIA and the FBI. With regard to me it is false. I have neither published nor stated any belief about who the assassins were and I do not claim to know. In fact, I tell you I do not know.

While it is right and proper to avoid prejudgements, how about your own? From the multitudinous committee leaks to its so-called report to your statement on this show that James Earl Ray was the killer of Dr. King and going back to your personal association with A.J. Weberman you have prejudged. You personally and your committee have thus made the same mistake of all prior official investigations of any nature. Now you add to this by falsely attributing this error to me.

It also is not true that you have had no association with Lane. It has been reported to me that his literature is given out in your office and I know you "stumbled" in repeating some of his propaganda as fact. In this the committee succeeded in what I would once have considered impossible, defaming the Memphis police. ("Stumbled" is the description of Ms Pat Orr.) In fact the committee owes its life to Lane's propaganda, presented to the Congress as fact. In turn he has commercialized this in a deal reported in six figures.

You also claim your committee has investigated at least ~~five~~^{four} areas never before investigated. If this is true and if these are investigations that should be conducted it would be gratifying to me. However, based particularly on the committee's public record, I doubt this. I therefore ask what these previously-uninvestigated areas are. As I see it you not only do not know what has been investigated, you have even failed to try to find out. Here I mean both you and your staff and your committee. You have not even obtained my books to learn what I have published of my own investigations. Neither you nor your committee. Not that it did not obtain any. Soon after Mr. Evans obtained copies of Frame-Up, my book on the King assassination, some of its content appeared in a Jack Anderson column as the original work of your committee. And out of context to boot. And in all the years of your supposed interest in this subject you have never once asked me what I know or how I might be able to help you.

I did begin by offering cooperation to the committee and by lending it materials the source of which was immediately and deliberately misrepresented to the committee Members. If you read the transcript of the first public session you held you will see that the Members were led to believe the records being discussed came from the Memphis prosecutor. He in fact had refused you anything without a subpoena and these records in fact are mine. In that same session the Members were misled in other ways. I am confident that if I had other transcripts I would be able to show you more of this.

Although I have called for a Congressional investigation of the JFK assassination since concluding my first book in 2/65 I cannot support one that begins with the unhidden bias of yours. Individually and collectively you began with conclusions. This is no way to investigate. I believe it shames the Congress.

We are in accord with regard to Mr. Sprague. In my view he has demonstrated an inability to conduct the committee's affairs properly and an unwillingness to do so. My opinion is based on personal experience as well as observation. Moreover, his departures from propriety are not limited to that to which Congressman Edwards objected, the use of electronic surveillance. He persisted in efforts that as a lawyer he knows are improper. This is recorded in your committee's files in my angry letters and his admissions and unkept promises to avoid impropriety.

This relates to what you mentioned on the show, questioning James Earl Ray. My personal knowledge of this goes back to 10/20 when I discussed it with Mr. Sprague and told him that Mr. Ray's counsel would have to insist on the preservation of Mr. Ray's rights. I knew this because I had conducted the defense investigations for the successful habeas corpus petition and the unsuccessful evidentiary hearing, and because that same lawyer now represents me in several matters. (You referred to a trial. Mr. Ray has never been tried and for years has sought a trial.) I have personal knowledge of the refusal of the committee to assure these rights and when it was possible for me to protest the intent to violate Mr. Ray's rights before his counsel had the opportunity I did so.

This is a sorry record. You, personally have compounded it in calling Mr. Ray the killer and the committee has done the same thing in its report.

Under this combination of circumstances how can his rights now be protected by your committee? And how can either you or the committee pretend to be fair and unbiased when you have already ordained him the killer and have made clear you want to question him to obtain a confession of the crime of which in court he claims he is innocent?

You described my criticism of the committee as severe. You then proceeded to say in a roundabout way that my criticism was understated, confirming that it had chased about a dozen false leads that you called "rabbits." My criticism was published in the Post. I am sure you were aware of it at the time. In this field I have unique credentials, as the most perfunctory investigation would establish - if it had been made. Yet neither at the time of this criticism nor since has anyone on the committee, including any one of its Members, sought to learn the facts.

Now you have all combined to make a bigger mess and to make a laughing-stock of the Congress. In personal conduct as well as disgraceful bias and prejudgment I see no basis for trust in this committee and none to believe it can fill the national need for a full, fair and open investigation.

With sincere regrets,

Harold Weisberg