

Route 8, Frederick, Md. 21701
3/22/73

Dear Mr. Trumbo,

The few reports I have had about your JFK movie, Executive Action - all of which may be inaccurate, I know - prompt this letter.

As I know your writing, you are among a small minority who has never written anything that did not serve a socially-useful as well as a literary purpose. Among movie script writers this makes you part of an even smaller minority.

As you draw near the end of a remarkable career any writer could envy, I fear you are engaged upon a project you will live to regret. Aside from not wanting this to happen to a man for whom I have so long had so great a respect - I bought hardbacks of your early work when I was borrowing grocery money and was unemployed - I don't want anything to further bury the truth about what I regard as the turning point in recent history, a tragedy that turned the country around and has an Ameriform fascism already a reality.

I have written more about the JFK assassination than all other responsible writers combined. It is no exaggeration to say I have done more responsible work, meaning research and investigation, than all other serious workers combined. If you have the disposition, you can readily learn whether or not this is an exaggeration. When I exhausted my capabilities on one method, I resorted to others. I have repeatedly sued the government with success to obtain suppressed evidence. Right now I have the FBI in court again, and as of now I have beaten them. They are headed for the Supreme Court in quest of a reversal, with all the delays they can contrive prior to that. This case will be precedent. The Justice Department regards it as that already. It says so. I think I have interviewed more witnesses, however you describe the word, than all other writers combined. There is not one who refused to talk to me. There are very few who declined to talk on tape. And I have so many thousands of FBI reports that there are more than 2,000 pages of them I have not yet been able to read. Meanwhile, I sue for more. You may doubt my judgement. I am trying to give you an idea of what I regard as the factual basis for it.

If you are willing to assume I am not irrational, the experience I draw upon in making a judgement is that of a reporter and magazine correspondent in national and international affairs, a Senate investigator and editor, and a war-time intelligence analyst. I was, actually, a trouble-shooter in OSS. I was then used by other agencies, including the White House and the State Department.

Fiction is a legitimate form for the telling of a non-fiction story. When I was trying without success to get my first book on the Kennedy assassination published - and it was also the first book on the Warren Commission and remains the one to which others have added only inconsequential detail - I also thought of trying to say what I then wanted to say. I began ^{this} a novel. I also never finished it, one of the reasons being I came to understand how irresponsible, how hurtful it could be. Yet in fact as in logic ~~it was~~ ^{it was} a better basis than ~~the~~ ^{the} saying a Texas oilman or oilmen did the job.

In recent years the largest single interference in my writing of what I have collected for writing has been an effort to frustrate the workings of two departments of disinformation, one official, the other spontaneous and unintended. At least one of these was sponsored by at least one intelligence agency and I think by two, the French and probably CIA. The CIA's interest in the subject and in me is not an illusion. I have carbons of some of its surveillance of me, which can't be disputed, and a confession, which can be.

If it can be exhilarating to contend with wrong-doing officials, it is depressing to try to keep the dedicated wrong from unintended evil. My efforts have had only limited success. Aside from whether or not your movie turns out to be of this character, it is not the only such current project. One which has less respectable auspices also has many indications of intelligence-agency inspiration. That one has money and pressure behind it. It will have the effect of exculpating intelligence agencies from any involvement.

The earlier phoney with the intelligence sponsorship, by the way, laid the assassination to Texas oil, too.

Obviously, you have faith in what you are doing or you would not be doing it. This does not, however, make you unique. The same is true of a multitude of really concerned people none of whom are right except in doubting the official mythology. Also obviously, I can't judge what you will be saying from a couple of inadequate newspaper stories.

Yours may be an ~~entirely~~ idea entirely your own. It may also be the result of the influence of others. A fair percentage of these others of whom I know are irrational, some on everything, some on this subject only. There are a couple of genuine paranoids, and they are among the most eloquent and persuasive. There are also a few dubious ones about whom it is not unreasonable to suppose they are not self-starters and do have questionable auspices. They all have their own "solutions" for which none has any basis in fact. The Los Angeles area holds the largest collection of these irresponsibles most of whom do not intend to be irresponsible. It is also the Mecca of others of this character who are not native to the area. I know too much about some of them and have had personal dealings with most of them.

However it is given to the people, most of what they have been told about the JFK assassination is false. This includes a fair percentage of that which disagrees with the official accounting. I don't for a minute think you want to do this. I am satisfied that most of the others who have done this did not have the intention and were serious and persuaded they spoke the truth.

The JFK assassination is not just another incident that lends itself to fictional or pretendedly fictional treatment. Whatever is said about it will be taken as truth, even if it is called fiction. Whatever is said by a man with your credentials, your professional and personal record, will be taken as truth by a very large number of people.

So, especially if you agree that history since that tragedy revolved around it, I hope you will ask yourself many questions, if you have associates you trust, not excluding them. Please begin by asking yourself, "can this hurt?". I don't think you want to do anything in any way hurtful, but are you really in a position to know with certainty what can and cannot hurt, what can tend to exculpate those most likely involved?

If there is any way in which I can help you, please ask.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg