

Dear Mr. Redhead,

1/7/86

Although I've not been able to respond earlier, your letter of the 11th has been on my mind. I've been troubled by one sentence in particular and by what I see as inconsistencies and I'm sure you do not. From your formulations I see troubles for you and your staff and what it will evolve as well as lost opportunities for worthwhile journalism. I think it may be better if I begin by trying to give you an understanding of my beliefs and record.

I regard the assassination of President Kennedy as the most subversive of crimes in a society like ours. While I can and always have excused dishonesty on the part of the administration that came into power as a result of that assassination for a short period of time when there was uncertainty and a need to try and preserve tranquility, I regard any dishonesty once this possible need no longer existed as an additional and quite serious subversion. My extensive experiences before college audiences in particular and all audiences in general, from the earliest days until now, tells me that public dissatisfaction with the official investigations is a major cause of disenchantment and distrust of the government - all administrations beginning then.

As a former reporter I was dismayed by the steadfast refusal of the press to meet its obligations - again from the very first. To this very day. I have also been dismayed by most of those called "critics" because they also have been irresponsible and have seriously misinformed the people when in my concept representative society can function only when the people are adequately and honestly informed.

In late 1968 Jim Garrison filed suit to compel the production of the so-called official evidence in the Clay Shaw trial. Only by accident did we obtain the to then suppressed report of the panel of experts convoked by the Department of Justice - and we didn't get a copy until after midnight the morning of the hearing. We then divided the work between the lawyers who would argue legal points and me, my work being factual. I digress, in a sense, for a word about professional experts, a major factor in your planned approach, and I ask you to keep this confidential. We'd arranged for an authentic expert, Dr. Cyril Wecht, to be our expert witness, before we knew of this panel report. We gave it to him to read and he didn't even understand it! I had to prepare him to testify! Once he understood it his testimony was effective. But what does this tell you about the best expert available to you? And I can add to this, if you want. Well, the morning of that hearing so distressed me that before anyone could say anything at the afternoon session, I rose and told the judge that neither side was informing him properly and, although I'd spent the morning session sitting next to Garrison's lawyer at the counsel table, I was disassociating myself from his presentation. I then sat in the audience.

This is my way of telling you that I will not be part of anything I regard as in any way less than fully honest, that there is no potential benefit to me that can change me on this, as it hasn't in the past. While for decades I have helped those I know will write other than I believe, I am never knowingly associated with writing that I think will not be honest or will mislead the people in any way. This extends to criticism of what might be regarded as my "side." If your research people have reviewed the press of the House assassins committee you may be aware that I was the source of most of the criticism of it based on fact.

I recognize an ambiguity in the most troubling sentence in your letter: "We are anxious to avoid getting too closely involved in criticizing the Warren Commission, the FBI or any other agency which may have obstructed the course of justice." However you interpret your meaning, how can you, with this doctrine, present both sides, which is a legitimate format?

I am not suggesting that you take up the cudgels and bludgeon the Commission and the agencies, but how can you avoid criticism of, your formulation, obstructing justice in so subversive a crime - a crime that I believe, with little doubt, turned the world around entirely, all subsequent history, all the great tragedies, coming from it? If you want to discuss this further, I'm willing. I'm writing instead of accepting your invitation to phone you collect to make it easier for you to think these things through

and discuss them with associates. Please, if you do think this through, ask yourself how with this doctrine you can be "examining both sides of the issue: both the evidence which tends to incriminate him and that which tends to point to his innocence." What will you use as incriminating evidence, that which comes from obstructed justice? Lies - and there were many? And would you, as the United States press has done, choose to ignore undisputed charges of fraud, misrepresentation and even perjury, both the criminal acts and the charges made in federal court, with regard to the existence or non-existence of basic evidence?

Can you do an honest show while ignoring what we now know beyond question, that both the Department of Justice and J. Edgar Hoover, head of the FBI, decided at the outset that the crime itself would never be investigated (and to this day, officially, it has not been) and that it was actually put on paper, which I have? If you do not ignore this, you are compelled to be "involved in criticizing."

What will you use as evidence of guilt if not the tainted official evidence, which also happens to be grossly and deliberately incomplete? I gave you a few examples of this when we spoke. Can you think of any evidence allegedly establishing guilt that is not tainted?

You have some of this problem in using witnesses whose testimony tends to ex-cuplate, and again I can go into detail. I think I mentioned what Tony Summers did to Carolyn Arnold's recollection, and by now it is fairly typical. Partisans like Mark Lane did the same thing from the same side, conditioning what witnesses recalled and not infrequently twisting it around when published.

Your formulation also limits you to that which was used of the official evidence and to forensic-expert evaluation of it. The story above is one example of this problem, and the misuse of expert witnesses by the House committee is another. You are, perforce, latched in to those who have taken positions and are partisans rather than impartial experts. And you seem to automatically ignore all the evidence the Commission and the FBI ignored.

Your format also limits your program to Oswald as the assassin and to eliminate any consideration of conspiracy. As I think I told you, I am the only critic who is not a conspiracy theorist and I've debunked all the published theories of which I know. There is a vast difference between theorizing who were conspirators and assessing, as a matter of fact, not theory, whether there had been a conspiracy. In law conspiracy requires a combination (as few as two persons) to do what the law says is wrong and then a step in pursuance of the deed. In the simplest formulation, if the crime was beyond the capability of any one man then, without question, there was a conspiracy. But does not your formulation eliminate consideration of this? Can you, with honest journalism, in 1986?

What about Oswald and what was not included about him in the official investigations? There is simply enormous opportunity for excellent reporting here. Before illness pretty much ruled out the possibility of my completing a book on Oswald and his actual history, I did begin this book. I now have solid proof that as a Marine, when he was getting all that supposedly subversive literature openly by mail, he had no overseas assignment not connected with the CIA and that he had both Top Secret and Crypto clearances. None of this is in the official evidence and none of it is in what the FBI and the Navy offered the Commission. On its part, the Commission did not pursue its leads. I did. With regard to this, the late Senator Russell, the most conservative member of the Commission, told me, "They have not told us all they know about Oswald," and he encouraged me to continue investigating his Commission's record. He was then chairman of Senate intelligence oversight, too.

The format you report is the standard one used by TV here from the first, and in no instance did a decent or even honest show evolve. You will be doing no more than CBS did as soon as it could after the Report was out and did again when there was published criticism of the Report. Or, a rehash. I am not suggesting that a new look is inappropriate but I do believe that you have ruled out a genuine new look. And in this will be flying into the face of official records some of which I think I mentioned, like the instant decision to go with a guilty, lone-assassin Oswald before any investigation was made or even possible and at the same time a decision to tell the world that Oswald

had already been proven guilty and would have been at trial.

As I read what you wrote - and if I misunderstand or misinterpret I'd like to hear from you - you plan to avoid real journalism and opt pap or at best milktoast. I would like to think that British TV journalism can feed adults more adult food.

There now is other official information available, for example, with regard to the KGB defector Nosenko, what he told the FBI and what then happened to him at the hands of the CIA. Even with regard to its official testimony relating to him and his incredible abuse. But you rule it out as I read your letter. In addition, it now is apparent that the entire CIA story about him and its alleged reasons for not trusting him is plain fabrication. These records, which I've received only recently, have current topicality in the case of the defected defector. One shorthand version of this new information is that as soon as the FBI informed the CIA that Nosenko said that the KGB suspect Oswald was an American sleeper agent the FBI never again had access to him. The CIA talked the Commission out of speaking to him, although he had offered voluntarily to testify when the FBI interviewed him, and then ~~it~~ ^{myself} invented an untenable cover story for all it did. Meanwhile, keeping him totally isolated for about three years while some of its stalwarts debated whether to just kill him and hide his body or drive him crazy and keep him in a bughouse.

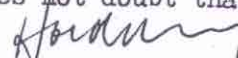
These are just a few things off the top of the head because after I got your letter I saw no purpose in trying to think of new evidence for you.

What you do with your program is entirely your affair, as is what you do not do with it. So also is how I spend my time, particularly now that I have so much less of it to expect, my affair. I am discouraged by your own representation of what you have in mind. I am aware that you can argue that you and we have an adult generation of those who hadn't been born or were infants and that they can present you with an audience. My view is that even they ought be better informed than the program you seem to be outlining will and I am confident that there are no technical limitations in informing them better.

When the Freedom of Information Act's investigatory files exemption was amended in 1974 - because of one of my lawsuits and over the veto of former Commissioner Gerald Ford - I was cast in a role most writers, particularly of nonfiction, would not welcome. In this litigation I represented not only myself but the people, and because the Act is not limited to U.S. citizens, any person anywhere. I thus make all the records I obtained as a result of this extraordinarily difficult and costly effort over much of two decades available to anyone including, within our limitations, copies. We have a copier. You are welcome to access to them, personally or through any of your associates. They are all arranged, as I received them, by file identification of their source, in my basement - at least a third of a million pages of once-secret records. Unsupervised access. I won't be with you - unless you want me to be and I agree. There are almost no exceptions and the only exceptions that come to mind are my own work product, as the lawyers describe it. You can have access any time I am home and I am home most of the time. If as you indicate you phone me again, I get an early start on daily therapy and I am almost always home by 10:30 a.m. I do have more than the usual number of medical appointments, three, for example on the 20th and on the 22d I'll be away until after lunch our time for the regular surgical checkup. That won't happen again for six weeks. The 20th is exceptional in that I probably won't be home until about 3 p.m.

Thanks for your good wishes on my appearance as my own lawyer, the government having created a conflict of interest between me and my lawyer. I think it went as well as I could hope. No word from the judge, who has a record of being an official rubber-stamp. This is the case in which I am defending myself against contempt and a judgement, unprecedented in FOIA litigation, with the still entirely undenied charges of official cfiminality - proven with the FBI's own records, disclosed to another, it happens. A friend, it also happens. I am inclined to believe that this judge does not want the undenied record I've made to go up on appeal and by now does not doubt that I'll appeal.

Sincerely, Arnold Weisberg





London Weekend Television

South Bank Television Centre
Kent House, Upper Ground, London SE1 9LT
Telephone: 01-261 3434
Telex: 918125 Cables: Weekendel London SE1

20th January 1986

Mr Harold Weisberg,
Route 12,
Old Receiver Road,
Frederick,
Maryland,
4701,
USA

Dear Mr Weisberg,

Thank you very much for your letter and comments. You have reinforced my awareness of all the danger that lies before anyone attempting to look at the death of J.F.K. I will keep your observations firmly in mind over the coming months and will approach all the 'evidence' with the appropriate measure of scepticism.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Mark Redhead'.

Mark Redhead
Associate Producer