

4/15/73

Dear Herb,

As you know, beginning after I completed my book on the King assassination I have been acting as James Earl Ray's investigator. As you may not remember, when Paul Cunningham and a Today crew went to the jail in which he then was and interviewed his brother Jerry, James would not speak but he asked me to speak for him, to the degree I could. I have never made any public mention of being his investigator and I refused to when he wanted me to so it could help the sale of my book.

Ray insists he did not kill King. I am satisfied he did not and more, that he could not have. Despite the contrary interpretation, when he copped the plea under Foreman's pressure, he made it as explicit as he could that he did not commit the murder and was not pleading guilty to having done it. So, there is no prospect of any big confession with details. For the present I have to ask you to regard it as confidential, but I am telling you that officialdom knows he did not kill King.

I have spent many hours in private with him inside the jail. I have interviewed those who knew him well in some depth. This includes two men inside maximum-security jails. I think I know him pretty well, know his attitudes and pretty much what he can say as well as what he cannot. You realize that when it served my personal interest to speak of these things I did not. These are the standards of his present defense. His three volunteer lawyers have also been silent in public.

I am aware of NBC's offers of the past to him. I also carried to him an offer that would have gotten him in every TV tube, from the chairman of a state legislative committee chairman with whom I has spent eight hours before carrying the offer to him. These and all other offers he has rejected. I carried one other that I can still remember with certainty, probably two.

Time has passed and his circumstances have changed. I think it is now possible that he might consent to a TV appearance if it meets with the approval of his lawyers. I am in regular contact with him by mail, so I think I have some understanding of his present state of mind. I also believe that his lawyers would consent to an interview that did not jeopardize his legal rights. Remember, he has never had a trial and seeks one. If you read the habeas corpus petition, you know there are substantial grounds, at least one of which I think could lend itself to decent TV treatment. I have, in fact, discussed the possibility with junior counsel, who agrees that an interview might be possible.

So, knowing NBC's interest of the past, I write to inquire of the present. Counsel will know of this from a carbon. If something comes of this, again subject to approval of counsel, I would be glad to discuss with the interviewer what my investigation discloses. Pretty much of it is on tape.

On another subject, two weeks ago I loaned one of your associates, the man with whom you saw me, two tapes, a printed transcript, a partial typed transcript and a clipping he said he'd return. I have not gotten them. They would be difficult to replace.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg