

September 17, 1968

Mr. Herbert E. Angel  
Acting Archivist of the United States  
General Services Administration  
Washington, D. C. 20405

Dear Mr. Angel:

Your letter of September 13 contains a phrasing that may, in the future, lead to misunderstanding. I write to clarify it.

We have received the windshield of President Kennedy's car and the original autopsy papers of which you have copies from the Secret Service, but no other documents or exhibits.

I do have a copy of a copy of the typed autopsy protocol, but no "autopsy papers". If by these words you intended anything else, I very much want a copy. The autopsy "papers" have been of great interest to me. They are incomplete as you have them in CD 371 and Exhibit 397. I have what I regard as a standing request for them and everything else relating to the autopsy.

There is a sharp inconsistency I must call to your attention, particularly because of your new responsibilities. The originals of the autopsy papers, all of them, were in the possession of the Secret Service. This means the notes, too. Now, the Secret Service, as a matter of practice, turned over copies, keeping or making other disposition of the originals. It is therefore possible for the Secret Service to provide you with copies of the missing evidence that is required to be in your possession or, if they have neither the original nor any copy remaining in their files, they can provide you with the identification of those to whom they may have delivered this evidence. I believe this is required, not only by and for the integrity of the country and the government and all the employees and executives involved, but also by law. I herewith again request that the National Archives ask for these missing papers.

I also call to your attention a slight difference between this renewal of this demand and some of the earlier ones. Here, by your own knowledge, you are required to have, as part of a file that is formally in the evidence of the Commission's record and of the exhibit described in that evidence as "identical" with that file, certain of the most crucial evidence of the entire assassination accounting. What you do not have you can readily obtain, assuming there have been no improprieties or illegalities.

Unless the National Archives is to be naught but a hamper into which soiled official clothing is tossed, I think it essential that it, in actuality, be the custodian of what it assumes responsibility for.

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Were this matter to go to court, there would be an enormous scandal. When I first discussed this with Dr. Bahmer two years ago, I made clear to him this was my intention, as soon as it was possible for me to do it. It will happen. The missing papers include the most basic of all the evidence of the autopsy, the original notes of the prosecutor. They are described by him in his testimony, when he held copies of them in his hands. I have some of the receipts for these. You have not been able to provide me with copies of all the receipts, again only because you have not obtained them from the agency of origin.

Inherent in what I am saying is that there has been destruction of evidence. I tell you that I have what I regard as unassailable proof that this has happened. I believe it intolerable, particularly when the subject is the murder of a President. Inherent also is that there has been illegal suppression of evidence. I again assure you I have what I regard as unassailable proof that there has been such suppression.

You may, within a short while, be a defendant in an action in which this is alleged or inherent. I think your interest, that of your agency and, above all, that of the government and the people, require that you make the effort to obtain and make available to qualified people that which you do not have, should and must.

There is another possible indirection in your language I want to clarify. You report what you "received ... from the Secret Service". Are there any such materials of Secret Service origin that you received from another source or agency?

I have no way of knowing what you know of the earlier correspondence. I assume your subordinates have adequately informed you. However, because I want you to be under no misapprehension, aside from requiring those things for which I ask because of the work upon which I am engaged, I quite seriously believe that the national integrity and honor require what I seek. If I cannot at the moment do more than make a record, that I do.

I also call to your attention certain questions which are unanswered going back to Dr. Bahmer's administration.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

P.S. If there is an index to CD 4, would you please send me a Xerox copy.