July 13, 1968

Dr. James B. Rhoads
Archivist of the United States
National Archives and Records Service
Washington, D. C. 20408

Dear Dr. Rhoads:

I have just returned from an extended trip and find your letter of July 5. I do not want it to go unanswered for long, so I make hasty response without the research I would prefer.

First, I address myself to your statement, "We do not agree with your statement that the FBI and the Secret Service were part of the Commission." My statement is that these agencies were the Commission's investigators and each "considered" for the Commission certain of the evidence. If the Commission had any other investigative staff, I would appreciate your calling this to my attention. The executive agencies provided 100 percent of the Commission's investigative services, 100 percent of the investigators and necessary related functions, including that of "considering" the evidence for the members of the Commission, and were there as part of the staff part of it.

Next, I quote you on the Attorney General's order, which you either misread or in part ignore: "That order was concerned with vesting title in the Government to the exhibits and other evidence of the Commission that were then in federal custody and were not federal property."

The clear meaning of this executive order and the manner in which it was public interpreted are contrary. The Attorney General actually said, "I have determined that the national interest requires othe entire body of the evidence considered by the Commission ... and now in the possession of the United States to be preserved intact." (My emphasis.)

It was to make this possible, for the United States already had that part of the "entire body of evidence" it did not own, that he additionally directed that "all the items not owned ... and were not returned ... should be acquired ..."

I believe it is impossible to interpret this order to mean that the "entire body of evidence" consists of only that which the government had that was the property of others. I hope it is not necessary to define "intact". It means whole; in one unit.

While it is correct to state, as you do, that the order "was concerned with vesting title in the government" of the property it did not own, it is entirely and quite obviously incorrect to interpret this order as saying and requiring nothing else.

Accordingly, I herewith renew all my requests under this order, specifically, that the Archives implement it by making the proper requests of the other executive agencies.

You say "Crafard Exhibit 5204 is identical with Armstrong Exhibit 5309-B." I intend no quibble when I say it rather may be similar to or made from the same source. If Crafard Exhibit 5204 was introduced earlier, which the numbering would indicate, the situation would be reversed. In any event, these are incomplete. If you will examine the index lettering on Armstrong Exhibit 5309-B, you will see that the page including the letter "O" is included. It appears on all the margins. However, there is no "O" page included in what is reproduced (19H88-9).

What I really want is the omitted "O" page. Perhaps it may be available only in the original, but since, by your own interpretation quoted above, this is now in your possession, it should present no problem.

Again I call to your attention the unanswered letters I have written, and again I ask for the missing explanation of why and how your regulations were violated to give others exclusive access to what had earlier been denied me, most particularly with regard to the Kennedy family contract with the General Services Administration, of which you are part. I believe I am entitled to adequate and meaningful response.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg