

September 19, 1970

Mr. Robert C. Vawter, Director of Public Affairs
General Services Administration
Washington, D.C. 20405

Dear Mr. Vawter,

Because of what is in no way reflected in your letter of September 17, the fact that I have filed a civil action in the matter, I make immediate response, your letter having just arrived.

First, I believe delaying any response to an appeal for three months is to make a mockery of any appeals mechanism, especially when public information and writing is involved, and most of all when the subject is the assassination of a President and its official investigation. In addition, I believe it violates the spirit and intent of the law, if not its letter.

Moreover, because there was no response, I was forced to file this suit. It sets forth what I seek and want, what I think I am entitled to have. Your letter appears to me to have been written for the making of a record to which there might later be reference, whether or not the record is faithful, accurate or complete.

As you must realize, I delayed the filing of this suit for a long time. My unsuccessful efforts to obtain what it seeks are of longer and, to me, costly duration. Nonetheless, because my purposes are meaningful research (the way I, not the government, conceive it) and publishing, not the embarrassment of the government, I would be happy to move dismissal of the suit once its purposes are accomplished. They are not as set forth in your letter. If this is not done, I will proceed with the action. I have been more than patient in the face of the most transparent delaying devices and interferences with my ability to research and write. While I have no desire to embarrass the government in court, I have even less desire to be party to any further delays. The decision will be the government's and I hope it will be communicated to me expeditiously.

It is pretty conspicuous that your letter was not written in the normal course of events. It was written after I filed this suit and after my recent letter to the National Archives dealing with one picture, to which there has not yet been response. If you or whoever will make the decision, if any, have not read it, I suggest this be done. I will not accept any picture with screen nor any made from one with screen.

If you should prefer an amicable settlement of this matter I suggest it may be more readily accomplished if self-serving and deceptive letters (whether or not so intended or even understood by you) are dispensed with.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20405



SEP 17 1970

Mr. Harold Weisberg
Coq d'Or Press
Route 8
Frederick, Maryland 21701

Dear Mr. Weisberg:


This is in response to your letter of June 20, 1970, addressed to the Director of Information in regard to your appeal from the alleged denial of the National Archives and Records Service to furnish you access to certain archival materials in connection with the assassination of President Kennedy.

Your letter appears to request five items: (1) a copy of the photograph taken by the Archives staff showing the front of the President's shirt; (2) a photograph of the knot of the President's tie; (3) a photograph, made from the negative prepared by the Archives, of the back of the President's shirt with the top of the collar included, showing the area of damage; (4) an enlarged photograph of the back of the shirt, not including the collar area, prepared from the negative for Warren Commission Exhibit 394; and (5) permission for you to examine the photographs taken with CBS equipment by the Archives staff.

After consultation with the Archives staff, it has been determined that items 2, 3 and 4 above have never been denied to you by the Archives and that item 1 has been denied to you only in terms of furnishing you a personal copy of the photograph. The Archives has specifically indicated it will allow you to examine the photograph indicated in item 1 in the National Archives Building. In addition, the Archives has indicated a willingness to prepare and to allow you to examine the photographs in items 2 and 3 in the Archives Building, to supply you the photograph in item 4, to allow you to examine item 5 photographs in the Archives Building, and to furnish you prints of the item 5 photographs.

It is hoped that the above disclosure procedures will satisfy your requests. We do not consider this in any way a denial inasmuch as we have endeavored to make each requested item reasonably available to you.

Sincerely,


RICHARD Q. VAWTER
Director of Public Affairs