2/4/70

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

Dear Dr. Rhoads,

In my initial response to your letter of 1/22, I told you I would be making further response when I could. I here address several other aspects.

First, however, I want to thank you for what I regard as a less equivocal, more meaningful expression, as when you say such things as "not in our possession" and "We do not know where it is". While I would hope your interest in the integrity of your archives would impel you to use the Attorney General's directive to locate and have this material, I take such words as those quoted at face value and suggest that had they been employed earlier much unnecessary correspondence between us might have been avoided.

At the top of page two you say you have no "lists of individual documents that have been made available for research". Insofar as this relates to what was classified and is not, I suggest you may want to have further inquiry made for you. Whether or not complete, others have been supplied such lists by the Archives, and it is my learning of this after I was led to believe otherwise that caused me to write you about it. But before developing this, I believe I have also asked for any list similar to the "List of Basic Source" materials for those files not numbered as CDs. Not the individual documents within each file, but of the files themselves. It would seem to me that whether or not the Commission had such a list, the proper utilization of this material, now and in the future, requires something like it. I have the file classification list. It also seems to me that because your agency was part of this part of the Commission's functioning, something like it might well exist.

As to the annotation of my list, this was offered by Mr. Johnson when I asked if there were any lists of what had been declassified but is indicated as classified on my list. He did not disclose to me the existence of such lists, led me to believe they did not exist, and I was happy to have my list annotated. It was in offerings others this seemingly new information that I learned others had been supplied what I had asked for and had not been given. I assure you the existence of such records was not disclosed to me, as it should have been, and an examination of what has been charged to my account will disclose that none was made for me. I realize your knowledge of this is necessarily second-hand. Partly for this reason I direct your attention to the self-serving character of such words as these:"The offer to correct your copy of the list was made in response to your specific statement that your copy of that list was not up to date". That occasion was not the only one on which I had said declassifying what researchers had been told was classified was utterly meaningless unless researchers were informed of it. I said I believe that when documents were declassified lists could and should be made. It is in this context, as a counter-offer that avoided disclosure of the existence of such lists, that the offer was made and accepted. To this day you have not informed me of the existence of such lists,

not even on the letter in question.

With regard to the Specter memoranda, without consulting the enormous file, I am willing to accept your version and extend any apology you feel deserved. There remain, however, questions in my mind that I share with you. The original date on which I had been promised these two memoranda withheld for a file all of which has allegedly been available for so long was not kept. Perhaps through faulty recall, I believe a second date also was not met. If the possible ulterior purposes of this withholding of these two memos only is not known to you, I suggest that as a responsible government official you might want to acquaint yourself with the possibilities. The only reason I was ever given was because this was necessary to make declassification "orderly". The opposite, to one not privy to your agency's knowledge, would seem a more obvious interpretation. If you can now give me any amplification of it, I would appreciate it and I think a written record of it might be helpful to history. I would also like to know the date on which the rest of the file was released to research.

When I long ago made the first request for a copy of a page of the Oswald Marines Guidebook I specified the page. Locating this now would be a great burden that should be unnecessary, for I did provide it. Quite obviously, I could not request a copy of a single page of a book without identifying that page. As I reminded you, the FBI was to have been the official repository of all Commission exhibits and was to have photographed each. I know there were notations on pp. 1,91.145 amd 189, but do not now know whether these include the page for which I asked. If possible, I'd like a copy of each of these, and I believe the FBI or Secret Service should be able to supply it. And this book most certainly was "considered by the Commission".

In Mr. Bringuier's testimony, he refers (10H46) to a report he gave the Secret Service about a man seen in the Habana Bar with Oswald. If, as it should have been, this report or any record of it has been delivered into your care by the Secret Service, I would like a copy of it, please. The information should include at least a partial identification on an automobile.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg