

Rt. 12, Frederick, Md. 21701
1/2/75

Mr. John Cawdson,
New York Times
1920 L St., NW
Washington, D.C.

Dear John,

Now that your stories have appeared I remind you of a conversation we had when you were in California in particular and several others. You had obtained what had been denied the defense and, of course, that interests the defense.

You also said you keep the most detailed notes.

And that some of what you had you had to keep in confidence, which is normal.

What you do not have to keep confidential can be of help in court and in preparing for court. Here, ultimately, is where those questions that first require answer can be answered. Here, too, there is a question of justice, one to which I hope your dedication is as great as mine.

So, I am writing to ask for anything and everything you do not have to hold in confidence so that we may have a chance of making the system of justice work, as the Times once called for in one of the most eloquent editorials I've ever read. Or quoted at length.

If I thought for a minute that you feared what may happen in court might be other than you wrote I'd not take this time. I'd know you'd refuse the request.

Sorry you had no occasion to call back after you were supposed to see the ballistics evidence, the day after the night you called. I am and have been in court on this under FOIA and have not obtained any. It therefore serves all interest, from the rights of writers to the integrity of the law and official compliance with it for me or my lawyer to know what they may still be withholding when at some point they again decide to give me some. I think they will before there is a hearing. In the past there has never been voluntary or full compliance and I'd like the law to have a little more meaning. Even for reporters. In this case they have lied in writing.

Please don't resent the avuncular. But the next time you work on a conspiracy story you might want to consider that the existence of one is determined by evidence, not by identification of the conspirators.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg