

Rt. 12, Frederick, Md. 21701

11/9/75

Senator Richard Schweiker (Attn Dave Marston)
Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20505

Dear Senator Schweiker,

Come hell, high water or anything other than a sale of subsidiary rights, a week from today Post Mortem will be released with permission to quote 750 words other than in a TV special as distinguished from a straight news account.

As of now there remain several possibilities of the sale of rights in this country, one abroad. I do not expect anything to come of any one and I have as a precondition a press conference for prior to a week from today. My reason has to do with the mass-audience CBS ~~update~~ updated videowhitewash of the JFK assassination now scheduled for a few days later. The CBS show has the capability of adding interest to this new book but it will also, if unopposed and unchallenged, seriously diminish your possibilities. I've been through this before, many times.

Until this week my mobility has been reduced since you saw me on crutches a month ago. However, neither the illness nor the hospitalization made it impossible for me to work. In the hospital I worked out a position paper for another committee, from which I heard frequently, as recently as yesterday. I have filed a new FOIA suit and have initialed perhaps a half-dozen more, each pinpointed for the kind of evidence I want for my work and I believe you will for yours.

Meanwhile, I'm following the doctor's orders literally. I know what I can and cannot do and I fully expect to do a large part of what is not proscribed. If I have to do it alone, as has happened in the past, I will make the effort and will end with more than enough success.

You and I have different problems. As I tried to suggest on our meeting a month ago you have much less time and immediate needs I do not see you meeting. Except for an infrequent note to Dave I have been silent. I think subsequent events have told Dave my forecasts were correct. You used the wrong people at the wrong time for the wrong objectives. Besides, on that flapping of wings to Mississippi I had done what to them and now could be done and under the present conditions I will spare the results with nobody until I am satisfied the time and approach are right. Neither now nor when this adventure was launched for you was either condition ripe and the means by which it was attempted were the greatest of handicaps.

Yesterday I received from Gary Schoener, with whom I used to be close, a copy of some of his correspondence with your committee, exciting to Gary, depressing to me. The results are not indicated and the final part, where I personally took Gary to the Hoover daughter, is not indicated. But this is all wrong for you now. It is the one way I see you defeating yourself. I can only imagine how many of these there have been. Orestes Pena is another. I asked him to wait until the time is right and he didn't and I dare say that the values he holds remain unknown to you and your staff. Going along with this your staff has consulted me on none of these things all of which I have worked on, some alone and some to show others they led nowhere.

You will remember I told you I can be blunt and that I owe you bluntness. I could have been much more blunt at that meeting and it is not the considerable pain that deterred me. However, I think this month, despite Dave's illness and the handicaps that means for you, put you in a position to look back and ask what you have as a consequence of

this work. And to compare it with what you might have added to the work I was and am prepared to give you. You might recall that I predicted the Edwards subcommittee would get nowhere because it lacked knowledge and would be depending on the undependable. I also told you I would stay away from that subcommittee.

The nature of my situation makes real selfishness impossible. So, when I appear to be serving self-interest and try to it is never a selfish interest, that I try to serve. Without the best commercial distribution of a book and the means of promoting and advertising it successfully and extensively the book has no real commercial prospect. When I learned this years ago it made major changes in what I do. It has required that I do what becomes an added liability. Because I regard it as necessary, whether or not my judgement is correct, I do it. Thus there are many literary and journalistic liabilities built into Post Mortem only some of which are the consequence of the limitations under which I work. I am aware of these.

I also do what is entirely unselfish. Among the recent ones have been what should in time help you. I showed Les Whitten, while I was in the hospital, how to establish the existence of all those FBI back channels and who was involved in them. If you hold hearings on this you now have all the leads you need and I have names other than ^{Les} used or went for. I have initiated other efforts the end result of which can cost you nothing and success in which can mean much to you. Because you will not figure in any of this except as beneficiary if it works you will have no possibility of being hurt or your efforts jeopardized. The first overt effort is about 10 days away. I am attempting, through the limited means I have to arrange others.

(I have not seen today's Post so I know only what I've been told about its Anderson column. After reading yesterday's I tried to reach Les, who was not home. Both columns are largely inaccurate. That psychiatric meeting was not a member executive session and it is not one of those still withheld. I've had it for years and analyzed it years ago. The treatment of the Jackie column earlier in the week was their formula and does not include ~~Les~~ ^{what} has great value for you if and when you get off the ground.)

The time has come for me to hold a press conference. When I had the book close to being printed I spoke to a reporter friend with a major newspaper in the hope that he would be assigned to the story. The paper assigned another, a competent man without the factual background and with the customary hangups on the subject. The first reporter had promised to arrange a press conference for me. It is now impossible. I can and if necessary will arrange my own. I have several copies of the books out, embargoed, to give those papers the opportunity to read and assess it. However, the political developments of the past week interpose serious problems. Tomorrow I will be initiating other efforts, this time aimed at the wire services only.

If it meets with your approval and you see no personal liability in it I believe the ideal way to handle this is my giving the book and all its backstopping to you this coming Friday, embargoed until Sunday a.m. papers, which permits evening TV news coverage. Except for what some reporters may have read prior to then this will pretty much limit the reporters to what I say and show. At best this can be no more than a teaser for what you may do. I propose to use what can't be refuted and what will be advanced by any effort at refutation. It had these advantages: you'll be separated from elves and the like and you will have solid and entirely new evidence nobody else has, more than enough to let your colleagues and the major media know that you have a solid evidentiary base for a real investigation. I have in mind limiting this to the sycophant's cry for what is "new." as you have seen, that which is called "old" gets no attention. There is more than I have in the book and there is the most significant in the book that the most perceptive of reporters will not detect unless I point it out.

The advantage for me is obvious. It increases the possibilities of major-media attention. I suggest this also becomes an advantage for you.

There is another advantage for you. I have observed the enormously reduced public interest in your efforts. While I do not know how much of this has been your desire I do know that if the press had really gone for what you said after the initial reporting with or without your assistance there would have been more and new stories. My belief is that you have reached the outer limit of that approach and with it not enhanced your credibility with the press. What has come back to me says this. These reporters have lived through too much of that.

While I do not depend on it and have no assurances, when for so long I heard nothing from you I made a similar proposal to others whose legislative authority is considerably more limited than yours. On the staff level it has approval. If anything comes of it my own view is that were something like this to happen jointly all interests would be better served, including personal and political interests other than mine, and that the presenting of anything like a united Congressional front to the media would be a definite plus.

No matter what does or does not happen, I will want to do all I can to help all those in Congress the seriousness of whose efforts I believe in. However, I do have new limitations, they will last for some time, and I have my own work I want to pursue. I will have to spend an enormous amount of time merely making a minimal effort with Post Mortem. The ~~is~~ elemental basis on which I have to work has required that I spend all my rest periods licking stamps on the mailing I'll be sending out as soon as the book is released. If this is not the way I prefer spending time it is the need and I meet it while my wife does what she has to, including updating our mailing list. I've had flyers printed since getting back ~~from~~ the hospital and I have local friends who ~~are~~ inserting them in envelopes. When I have no choice but to spend time licking and sticking thousands of stamps I do have less time to devote to what can be of help to others and to carrying my own work forward.

Please do not misunderstand me. I can think of many reasons why you may not want to have a press conference with me and if you decline I will not hold it against you. I do think it will be helpful to our common interest. And I do know that if something like this is not done the result will be to limit what I will be able to do on a level other than licking stamps. Despite several other obligations in the week ahead I expect to have all the stamps licked before the end of the week.

I am absolutely certain that in head-to-head sworn testimony where others and I are made publicly aware of what we know anyway, the penalties of perjury, this thing will come apart in a limited number of ways. I am without fear of any risk on my part. I am told by my doctor - I have asked - that emotional strain does not present any jeopardy to my health. My past with the Senate and in other pursuits leaves me without doubt that this kind of approach holds high prospect. It is also the natural kind of dramatic situation for which as a generality the press does go. As a young man I used it myself and never knew it not to work.

I have taken this time because I will very shortly have to make decisions that will control what I will and will not be able to do. If you agree I think that aside from the simple matter of arranging for the meeting with the press there are some advance steps you should take. This means mostly the serving of subpoenas on people I can readily identify for you, more and other than ⁺ suggested to you a month ago.

Whatever you decide, I do wish you success and good luck.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg