

1/19/77

Dear Mr. Richards,

I return your clippings and carbon of your letter to the editor herewith.

If any of the clippings is missing I'm sorry. I'll explain.

When mail comes I skim it and stack it for the time I can respond. When it contains clippings I put them in a special place to read when it becomes necessary for me to rest.

As you will notice I trimmed your turn edges and where I could I added some indication of the source. After a few days a clipping without a date of source is close to totally valueless. For the future it is without value.

When I read the clips I did not recall you asked for them back. In rereading your letter this morning to respond I saw this note and as best I could recall how I had filed them I retrieved them and return them.

It may be difficult for me to convey the realities of my life to you in a manner that can make what I believe is required of me comprehensible but I'll try. I'm getting along in year. I have no help. I've had several serious illnesses. The thrombophlebitis limits me and in fact is responsible for my being behind on filing what accumulated when I was ill. But I still work a long day trying to bring new information to light and getting it out in ways that can be meaningful. I also spend a fair amount of time adding to an archive for the future, what represents no value to me in the present. These various efforts leave me no time to waste. If I have to copy clippings that are not necessary in my work and return them that takes time I can't spare from my work of the present and costs I'd rather expend on acquiring suppressed evidence.

The clippings present contain nothing I did not know. They could have a future value if properly sources in letting scholars of the future study press treatments and reactions, etc. There are occasions on which papers I do not see do report what does not appear around here. This is true of wire-service stories, too. Sometimes of columns, which are cut.

But the value is not worth the time. Stories from your local papers, particularly the Post-Dispatch, could be of assistance but only if I can read and then file them without having to copy or return them or engage in correspondence over them. This is not the best way for me to spend what time I have, particularly not when at my age I should be sleeping more than I do.

You have not learned to discriminate between sources. Penn Jones is a fine person but on this subject he is not rational and he has rarely been dependable. You did err. When you include the CCI on your letter to the editor I can understand this better. Many of you have been imposed upon by those you felt you could trust, those you thought were selfless but who are not, those who will do or say anything for the attaining of an immediate end. The records of groups like AIB and CCI are not good ones. They have deceived from one side as the government has from the other.

The editorial is mindless propaganda, of course. But the budget request by the committee is excessive and has worse flaws. The record of the committee to date is indistinguishable from that of those who have covered for the government. You should have perceived that its leaks and then its report ^{both} begin with the same preconceptions, presumptions of guilt without any investigation. Too large a staff is as much a problem as too small a staff. Too much money is worse. They were going to spend money in anti-democratic, authoritarian ways that were they not wrong would still be a bad way to run such an investigation.

Sincerely,

Jan. 12

Mr. Weisberg,

There has been very little in either St. Louis paper about the House investigation. What there's been I've sent with this note.

I also responded to an editorial that appeared in the Globe Democrat. I have included both the editorial and my ~~reply~~^{letter} for you to look at. I would appreciate any comments or corrections you might like to make about either. I wasn't sure about the threat of a lawsuit on the release of the Zapruder film, but was relying on a statement made by Penn Jones in Forgive My Grief about such action being taken. If I am wrong my apologies.

I have contacted Professor Wrone about the seminar material and am awaiting his reply. Thank-you for making known its existence.

I just finished Post Mortem- excellent. Please let me know if I can ever be of assistance to you. I will be more than glad to oblige.

Sincerely,

Tom Richard

Please return the clippings if possible for they are my only copies. Thank you.

Editorial Was It Really John Wilkes Booth?

The investigation into the assassination of President John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King is mushrooming beyond belief.

It was originally contemplated that \$500,000 would be spent to conduct the new inquiry. Now that the bureaucratic sleuths have gotten things rolling, they say they can't do the first year's investigating for a penny less than \$6.5 million.

They also can't see how they could do the kind of job expected of them unless they hired at least 170 investigators. No one of the House Committee of Assassinations yet has had the courage to try to find out what the assassination probes want for the second year.

Once these 170 ferrets go to work, it is rather certain they will fan out across the country and the world. Then, inevitably, there will be a demand that they become a permanent investigative team.

They may want to probe all U.S. presidential assassinations, as well as assassinations of other prominent persons. This raises infinite possibilities: Did John Wilkes Booth shoot President Lincoln? Were the doctors who attended William McKinley after he was shot guilty of malpractice? What is the real

story behind the assassinations of Leon Trotsky, the exiled Russian leader, and South Vietnam's President Ngo Dinh Diem?

It also can be predicted the House probes probably will spend almost as much time investigating the FBI and the CIA as they do the assassinations.

It is interesting to contrast this investigative zeal with the effort the House and the Senate have put forth to uncover the wrongdoing of their own members.

The House Ethics Committee, for example, has ignored a long series of serious charges and court convictions against a number of its members. It has gotten around to investigating only a handful of these cases.

The most recent scandal involved charges that 20 or more members of the past and present membership of the House accepted gifts from South Koreans who were attempting to gain influence. Some of the sums involved were quite large.

The House Ethics Committee did not approve an investigation of the South Korean gifts until this week. It is a safe bet that there will not be 170 investigators assigned to sniff out evidence that could embarrass or incriminate members of the House in this inquiry.

Mailbag

Seeks answers to assassination questions

How can a newspaper possibly regard an investigation into the assassination of President Kennedy and Martin Luther King as "mushrooming beyond belief?"

I find it incredulous, yet typical of the news media's effortless attempt (and interest) in this country to investigate and to help disclose the truth about these murders and the accused assassins.

Why is so much print (not to mention money and time) devoted to the Patty Hearsts and Gary Gilmores of the world?

Why is it that an irresponsible, hypocritical, spoiled little rich kid like Hearst and a cold-blooded convicted murderer like Gilmore make the front page and are made into folk heroes by the media, while the evidence supporting a conspiracy in these assassinations (which is and has been rampant) has gone unreported and virtually been ignored by the media since the crimes were committed?

Why is it that when something pertaining to these crimes does find its way on to the printing press that half of them are found not on the front page, but closer to Dear

Abby and the comic section?

Furthermore, why did the news media remain silent while Life Magazine suppressed the most important film ever made on this planet (the Zapruder film), and why didn't they mention that it wasn't released until several private investigators filed suit under the Freedom of Information Act in 1974? That's 11 years of suppressed evidence unknown to the American people thanks to the media and Life.

Why has there never been mention of the fact about material evidence destroyed in the Kennedy case?

Why have the true investigators of the crime (not CBS, CIA, FBI or the Warren Commission) been shunned by the news media and publishing firms when a large portion of evidence these people have produced has gone unchallenged?

Is \$6.5 million dollars really

too much to ask for to find out the truth about who killed one of our potentially great Presidents?

NORM RICHARDS
St. Charles, Mo.