

Senator Paul S. Sarbanes
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

3/16/90

Dear Senator Sarbanes,

In today's mail with your letter of the eight, for which I thank you, I received the enclosed letter from the co-director of appeals in the Department of Justice. I hope you will not find my letter to him intemperate. He and his co-director have been lying to me for almost a decade, as long as they've been in their present positions.

If the FOIA subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary Committee ever gets around to holding hearings on HR 50 and if it really wants to know what the practices have been, I doubt if they'll be able to find as thorough a catalogue of horrors as I have and only begin to indicate in my ~~very~~ angry reply to Mr. Huff.

There are many ways in which the government can interfere with first-amendment rights. One is by defaming writers in particular. These creatures have been doing that with me since my first book appeared in 1966. Can you imagine the impact on the LBJ White House when the FBI twisted an annual gathering at a farm we then operated, after the Jewish high holidays and by the Jewish Welfare Board, into the alleged annual celebration by my wife and me of the Russian Revolution? (What we then did the University, with my encouragement, duplicated with its Old McDonald's Farm, at Wheaton.)

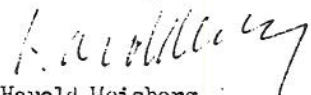
In less than a month I'll be 77. I hope! and I'm severely handicapped in what I can do, with serious illnesses and post-surgical conditions. (So, apologies for my typing.) But I am the first member of my family ever born into freedom and in my work I've tried to repay for what became mine on birth.

I believe it is because they cannot fault my work that I've gotten the kind of attention I've gotten and still am getting from the Department and the FBI. It is the only way in which they can undermine or deprecate this work. And it is to be able to leave an accurate record, where their's are fabricated, distorted and misrepresented, that I am anxious to get what they are still withholding relating to me. Aside from their traditional stonewalling, I think a desire to prevent that accounts for their steadfast refusal to comply with my requests under FOIA and Privacy. Plus fear of embarrassment.

My wife and I worked for the Senate in the 1930s and we know that conscientious Members and staffs are always too busy. I can only imagine how much busier at least the Members must be today.

So I thank you for the time you have taken to respond. If your office can send me a copy of HR 50 I'd like to read it, thanks.

Best wishes,


Harold Weisberg

PAUL S. SARBANES
MARYLAND

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 8, 1990

Mr. Harold Weisberg
7627 Old Receiver Road
Frederick, Maryland 21701

Dear Mr. Weisberg:

Thank you for getting in touch with me about possible amendments to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and the Privacy Act of 1974. The F.B.I. First Amendment Act of 1989, H.R. 50, regulates the conduct of the FBI in certain matters relating to the exercise of rights protected by the first amendment of the Federal constitution. It was introduced January 3, 1989 and referred to the House Committee on the Judiciary.

As you know, I am a strong supporter of The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and the Privacy Act of 1974. I assure you I will keep your views in mind when reviewing H.R. 50 should it come before the full Senate for consideration.

For your information, I am enclosing a copy of "A Citizen's Guide on Using the Freedom of Information Act and the Privacy Act of 1974 to Request Government Records." Please do not hesitate to contact me about any other matter of concern to you.

With best regards,

Sincerely,



Paul S. Sarbanes
United States Senator

PSS/rdh

Enclosure