12/7/69

Mr. Thomas J. Kelley
Asst. Dir., Protectuve Intelligence
U.S.Secret Service
Washington, D.C. 20226

Dear Mr. Kelley,

Were I engaged in the work I do for ego gratification or other personal or selfish reasons, I'd be offended at your letter of December 4, which is an insult to my intelligence and a self-defamation of yours. It leaves me no choice but to take it apart and make a record od its non-responsiveness and, indeed, what a suspicious person might characterize as deceptiveness. I do not have a low opinion of your intelligence or capacity, so I assume this not to have been accidental.

Your concluding sentence, pretendedly addressed to all but one of the many proper questions raised in my letter of 11/24, is the only response to any of them but one: the illegible parts of the one document, the deathcertificate. That sentence reads, in full, "Our file simply does not contain them other information or explanations you requested."

From my by now unfortunately extensive experience with government by semantics, I immediately wonder about the first two words, "our" and "file", especially when you in this case sign yourself as "Assistant Director, Protective Intelligence" (but on the stationery of the "Office of the Director"), whereas your previous letter, on the same letterhead, identifies you as "Assistant Director" only. From this I think it is not unreasonable to wonder if all you are saying is that a single file in protective intelligence does not contain the information I seek, the government has, and under the law must provide me.

Because I seek truth not scandal, want to see justice done with no unnecessary injustice, I have undertaken to be forthright with you people, even though this was not to my personal interest or benefit. If you are familiar with the earlier correspondence, I indicated an intention to go to court to get what the law guarantees me. If you did not so understand this, then please accept my sincere assurances this is not only my intention but I have arranged for counsel. Now I would like you and Mr. Rowley to ask yourselves what your positions personally and as responsible officials of the Secret Service will be, what image of the Secret Service will be cast, if and when in a court proceeding, to take but one of the abundant such instances,it comes out that the Secret Services says it does not have, does not know where any copy of the receipt it signed for the photographs and X-rays of the so-called autopsy of a President of the United States is? As I was frank to tell you, every official accounting of this film is contradicted by every other one, and official records in my possession, as I also told you under date of 11/24, indicate "these papers were directed to you". If this is not enough to disturb you, add to it the failure of the Secret Service to respond in any way to my proper question about about what happened to the pictures in processing, these same pictures turned over to it for "safekeeping".

Should you or Mr. Rowley desire, I can go into just about all the requests I have made of the Secret Service in identical or similar fashion. I would hope this is not the case, but if you for one minute doubt it, ask me. Here I refer not alone to my letter of 11/24.

But with regard to the letter of 11/24, there is not a single question I asked that is unequivocally answered by your single, evasive sentence, and there is not a single one to which you cannot make specific, unequivocal response. I am not a lawyer, but I have consulted and retained one of unquestionable competence. He agrees with my belief that each and every item is covered by the Freedom of Information law, that each one is outside any proper invocation of any of its restrictive provisions. He is an authentic expert on this particular law, having been general counsel of the Senate Committee whence it came. So, I ask that you reread my letter and provide the meaningful answer that without any possibility of doubt you or others in the Secret Service can and should. I ask that you do this promptly, for this is the requirement of the cited law, unnecessary delay in itself being a violation, and I stongly encourage you to review the entire file of correspondence in the same manner and for the same purpose. It is not my desire or intent to embarrass you, Mr. Rowley or the Secret Service.

There is a strange inappropriateness in all of this, for I am the one writer working in the field who has expressed any sympathy for the Secret Service and its employees and the one who has gone out of his way to defend them against foul charges falsely made rather widely. If you are not aware of this, others in your agency are, and I appreciate their expressions of thanks delivered indirectly.

In any event, I hope you can be persuaded that the time for shabby games with words is past. I also suggest that many reputations and futures are deeply involved and may well be through coming generations. Because I do not for a minute believe that anyone in the Secret Service was in any way responsible for the assassination, wanted it or could in any way have prevented it, save by prohibiting this trip (and I do have proof it had as much reason in advance here as it did in two other contemporaneous instances where it did take action), in the past I have offered to discuss the fruits of my investigation with Mr. Rowley. He has seen fit to reject this offer, which is his right. I now extend it to you, realizing you cannot do it without his approval. However, the situation has changed, and I now attach two conditions: that my lawyer approve and that you undertake to assure me that nothing you learn from me goes any further without my specific agreement.

Whether you accept this offer or not, I hope the evasions, equivocations and false statements on this subject are all in the past. I expect meaningful, specific responses to the requests I have made or specific reasons in each case for not providing them.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

CO-2-34030

TREASURY DEPARTMENT

UNITED STATES SECRET SERVICE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20226

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

December 4, 1969

Mr. Harold Weisberg
Coq d'Or Press
Route 8
Frederick, Maryland 21701

Dear Mr. Weisberg:

In response to your letter of November 24, we have reviewed our copy of the death certificate, which is also a poor reproduction of the original.

It is our opinion that the words after "Immediate Cause" are "Gun Shot of Brain." The signature appearing on the document is that of Kemp Clark, M.D.

Our file simply does not contain the other information or explanations you requested.

Very truly yours,

Thomas J. Kelley

Thomas J. Kelley
Assistant Director
Protective Intelligence