

C.B. Sharrett
120 E. State St.
Doylestown, PA 18901

April 8, 1977

Harold Weisberg
Route 12
Frederick, MD

Dear Mr. Weisberg,

Having endured the Vietnam War and sundry personal tragedies I doubt that I am in need of a security blanket; I know "life is real", that the world is mean and man uncouth. If I felt in need of psychoanalysis there are numerous clinicians in my own area without any need to consult you. I must say I rather resent your condescending, vitriolic tone to what I considered an essentially friendly letter posing relatively simple questions and remarks.

Furthermore, you have not really articulated your precise criticisms of the Committee except to say they are "crooks" and starting with the presumption of guilt (which I must argue for a number of reasons). Either Preyer, Stokes and the others are criminals or agents or not; either Tanenbaum and Lehner are incompetents or they aren't. So far the criticism you have given me is fairly subjective and often unreasonable. You must understand that the pressure those people have been working under has been intense, with insufficient funding, no access to documents, no ability even to make phone calls. Still, what they have been able to get together thusfar certainly strikes me as positive. Is it bad that they say the Warren Commission lied on some crucial areas, like Oswald's ties to the CIA, or the anti-Castro plots, or Ruby's Mafia background, or the fallaciousness of the medical evidence?? The point is I see and hear a totally different story when I deal with the Committee firsthand and then I get a picture from you that I find incomprehensible. I don't feel that I am stupid or imperceptive on this since I have spoken with many other people who have talked to the staff and their attitude is more or less the same. The point is, I see a group of basically naive people (who are rapidly becoming more knowledgeable of the situation) ~~are~~ trying to do a job against ridiculous odds and the Bacchae of the news media and I just naturally must support the underdog.

Methinks you are overcome with what scientists call the NIH (Not Invented Here) syndrome (if you'll pardon a little psychoanalysis of my own), i.e., "you either do it my way or not at all." I pick this up in your constant harangues against the "nuts" and "assassination ripoff artists"—I hear enough of this in Time magazine without hearing it from a man who has been in the vanguard of assassination research. I am aware you have been making such statements for some time and frankly it is a bit tiresome. We are all aware there are a few people ripping us off but it does no one any good to keep circulating those kinds of attacks. I have hoped for ~~some~~ a long time that there could be more cooperation among people interested in this matter but as long as egos and tempers get in the way it will be hopeless to mobilize people politically on the assassination issue.

Getting back to the Committee, I am not seeking reassurance on the nature of Man, I am simply suggesting a little more reasonableness and patience in making

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judgments on this affair. You apparently made up your mind very early on, before the Committee itself could really be organized much less make any real headway or develop its methodology. I know politicians are bastards, but in this instance I would focus on Congress itself rather than the group of young people making a rather valiant effort. I am perfectly willing to face the possibility that the Committee may be a set-up job, a complete farce, or whatever, but at this point I think even a weak-kneed investigation may do something to awaken the public consciousness (the really insurmountable task) and cause a demand for still more inquiries. The waters are indeed becoming increasingly muddy of late; even Sprague has second thoughts about Congressional investigations, but putting it into the hands of a Special Prosecutor would put the ball back into the court of the Executive, just where it shouldn't be. So what are the options?? Harold Weisberg can continue doing 800-page tomes on JFK and it will be terrific except no one but people like myself will read them and they will have minimal effect on the course of history or how it is written. Keeping this question in a public forum, however, as ludicrous as it often seems, might make people more inclined to read Post-Mortem and to think about political murders critically.

I suppose we do not see eye-to-eye on this subject so it's better to drop it. My final statement is that the bottom line with the House probe, to my perception, is that the opposition saw it as a threat therefore it died. One can examine the various components of this collapse, from the news stories to the Sprague business, but the basic message is what looked like an incredibly promising venture eight months ago is mysteriously shot to hell today. Perhaps we are all naive if we think any investigation will make the world safe for ~~the~~ democracy without the full awareness of the public.

Regarding the questions on the King case, I do not claim to be an authority nor am I trying to satiate my lust for the gory details by getting "high on the heady stuff" of conspiratorialism. I am simply a citizen trying to separate facts from fantasy and again I'm forced to say I felt your attitude was abusive on this score. The points I addressed to you came from sources I consider reliable, not from Argosy magazine or a few lectures. I am rather convinced that Fensterwald, Lesar, Livingston and Wayne Chastain know a good deal about the identity of Raoul. Huie and Foreman also know more than they have said since Huie at least did a good deal of research on the Raoul business which he later contradicted; Trent Gough has a tape of a phone call with Huie that tends to prove Huie a liar. Regarding "Frenchy", I know you give little credence to the tramps photographs, but at this point there is no way I can accept the idea they were what they appeared to be. Gerry Patrick Hemming has identified "Frenchy" as a mercenary from the Florida Keys group and also identified his closest associate, who has apparently been located by the Committee. Unless all of the information I've gathered is nonsense and these people have been misleading us it seems there are indeed connections between the Kennedy and King murders. I only wanted more of your own analysis.

Despite the occasional tone of this letter I am by no means angry and am not trying to start some kind of a feud. You could hardly expect me to sit still for some of the remarks of your last letter, however. I may very well make mistakes or appear foolish at times, but no more so, I trust, than anyone else trying to solve these problems. I try to use discretion in my actions to avoid harming or embarrassing another party, and I have no desire to make a dime out of any of the work I do on this matter. I thank you for your attention and I hope to hear from you in the future.

Chris Sherritt