

1/15/77

Dear Tim,

Please excuse if I do not read and correct. Split fingers make the typing more difficult. They are healing but it is awkward and slows me down.

I regret the accuracy of my prophecy. There are other publications, like *Playboy* and *New York Review*, that will not touch me for reasons having to do not with me but their pasts with me. Have you heard about the new San Francisco magazine, *Mother Jones*?

1. My reactions when the House voted to investigate the JFK and King assassinations were mixed dismay and hope. (I avoid your word "re-open" because I believe there never was an official opening.)

The dismay was from the records of those who persuaded the House to investigate and how they did it, the hope that despite all there might yet be a real investigation.

Congressmen Downing and Gonzalez have been in touch with only the lunatics and commercializers and have used material from them only, material that on its face is fraudulent.

Mark Lane's combination of commercialism, fabrication and incompetent theft led to the deception of the black caucus on the King assassination and to the actual passing of the resolution. With both assassinations non-fact is what brought the investigation about.

2. I never believed the committee would get the \$6.5 million it asked for, never believed it needed or wanted an appropriation of this size and regard is as representing an approach and an investigation from which there is no basis for expecting what the nation wants and needs. The staff of 170 was not Sprague's idea. It was planned by Downing's staff prior to the enactment of the resolution. I tried without success to talk them out of it.

3. The committee has not approached the investigation in the right way. His answers your formulation. I believe some changes will be forced if the committee is continued. I believe they must be and long before there was any publicity over its plans for clandestine operations and electronic surveillance gadgetry I was aware of its utter and intended disregard for basic constitutional and legal rights. When these had begun in private I opposed them strongly and when there was not the promised reform and changes broken my limited relationship with the committee. The limitation was first by it and then by me after a clear anti-democratic record was made by it, if in private, and after I became aware of what had transpired at its meetings, almost all of which were secret.

My views that address "what would you change" are as they were when I was consulted. This was first just before the middle of 1975, thereafter twice by those who spoke to me for Downing and on October 20, 1976 by Sprague and his then top assistants and separately by some of his staff. They will be investigating the functioning of agencies of government in a homicide in each case and each homicide. The only proper beginning point is to establish that basic fact of each homicide that can be established to begin with. Unless this is done there is no basis for a real, an honest or a professionally competent investigation. My view has since been confirmed by the committee's trivial report. It makes explicit what was unequivocal in its improper leaking, that it repeats the prior mistakes of preconceiving who each assassin was.

4. I was consulted, informally, on the selection of Sprague. I knew nothing of him other than his record in the Yablonski case, a record of competent prosecution. When I learned that he had been Specter's closest assistant I was explicit in stating my belief that he had a conflict of interest. In my view his record since appointment has been only bad as I knew it. I believe it is a crippling and prejudicial fault to have selected only former prosecutors and police investigators for the top jobs. I would have had some experienced and competent defense counsel of criminal-law experience and some experienced in the handling of scientific evidence.

5. As I have indicated I was contacted by the committee. In retrospect I have no reason to believe it was "to assist in the investigation," I believe it was mostly to avoid subsequent criticism for not having contacted me. I offered much from my files. None was asked for. I forced some of it, politely, on a staff lawyer who came here. This official evidence was misrepresented to the committee members in a session as proving the opposite of what it proves and as coming from a different source. I have the transcript.

6. I do not know if I will have any new books coming out this year. Other work, primarily on the FOIA suits, forced me to lay a new one on the King assassination aside in April. It was then two-thirds drafted. I have no contract for it.

7. While the government's regular dirty tricks in these FOIA cases and the tolerance of them by the judge has slowed down what I can do in the suit for the spectrographic analyses (not plural) and neutron activation analyses we hope to be taking first-person testimony soon. This is the direct result of a sweeping, really an unprecedented and unreported (in the public press, not law books) decision of the U.S. Court of Appeals. IN July it decided unanimously for me whereas in the original case it went 9 to 1 against me. It held that what I seek serves the nation's interest and it gave me the right to take first-person testimony including from those FBI agents who had taken a retirement I believe to be able to avoid my questioning them under oath.

I have not filed any FOIA suits since then although I have been extremely active in others filed before them and in preparing for still others.

The appeals decision is No. 75-2021. The other cases are C.A.75-1448 and C.A. 75-1996.

8. Biographical material other than is on the back covers of my books is that I was born in the center of Philadelphia 4/8/13, was a reporter beginning in the late 1920s or early 1930s, a Senate investigator and editor beginning in 1936, returned to reporting (magazine) about 1940, specializing in investigative reporting, and became an intelligence analyst in the OSS in World War II. Although I was an analyst and not a spook I was a sort of troubleshooter in OSS. My first job was an investigation that overturned a frameup by the military police. My analytical work included economic and political.

9. If James Earl Ray testified before this committee it will be a serious mistake and it will be over the expressed objections of his lawyer, Jim Mesar. I think he should not testify and that if he does it should be at the end, not the beginning of the investigation. This is only in part because his legal remedies are far from exhausted and would inevitably be prejudiced whatever he testifies to or is asked about. There have been no new legal developments. His petition certiorari was rejected by the Supreme Court.

I hope this answers your questions.

Good luck?

Tom Wilk
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January 8, 1976

Dear Mr. Weisberg,

I interviewed you at your home in April 1976 as part of my Feature Writing course at Rider College. Subsequent attempts to get an article on you published in Penthouse and Crawdaddy Magazines failed.

With the House of Representatives re-opening the investigation of the assassinations of John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King, I have decided to try again to get the article published. To keep the article current, I am enclosing a list of eight questions for you to answer.

I know you are a busy man but I hope you will find the time to answer the questions. ~~I ~~marked them short~~~~ I have kept them short. I am enclosing five dollars to cover the cost of postage, envelope, your time etc. I feel confident this time around and I will send you a copy of the article when its published.

Thank You,

Tom Wilk

Tom Wilk

1. What was your reaction when the House voted to re-open the investigations of the John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King assassinations?
2. Do you believe the Committee will get the 6.5 million it asked for?
3. Do you believe the committee is approaching the investigation in the right way? What would you change?
4. What do you think of the selection of Richard Sprague as chief counsel? Who would you have chosen?
5. Have you been contacted by the committee to assist in the investigation?
6. Will you have any books coming out this year?
7. What is the status of your Freedom of Information lawsuit to get the spectrographic analysis and neutron activation analysis of the JFK bullets? Have you filed any other lawsuits since April 1976?
8. Could you give some capsule biographical information including birthdate and birthplace, service with Senate Committees and Office of Strategic Services during World War II and what your duties with them were?
9. Has there been any new development with James Earl Ray and whether he will testify before the House Committee?