

Delegate Walter Fauntroy
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

Rt. 12, Frederick, Md. 21701
12/25/76

Dear Mr. Fauntroy,

Your making your own Christmas merrier with your newest political commercialization of the great tragedy of the assassination of Dr. King reminds me of those within my lifetime (and with some of whom I contended) who brought the same dignity, responsibility and dedication to the Congress. Men like Tom-Tom Hefflin, Gene Eox, Martin Dies, Joe Starnes and all the other Bilbos and Rankins. You follow in that tradition and disgrace it not a bit.

You are in the tradition of all those public officials who have persecuted friendless and powerless blacks over the generations, of the cops and prosecutors who have poisoned the wells of justice with the venom of ex parte prejudice when you could assure that one side only would be heard and thus were safe in mindlessness.

You are a true Un-American in using this as bait for an extension of a committee and intimidation for its appropriation, you will do something only "if we succeed in getting" all the money you seek.

After the story was leaked for maximum public attention and reporters starting pressing you there were a few, if essentially meaningless, qualifications added. All this is a "lead," it is "unsubstantiated" but you are nonetheless "confident of what you call "a reliable source." Fidelity to the Martin Dies-J. Edgar Hoover method could not be more perfect.

Your faithfulness to their tradition could not be more total. You begin with a presumption of guilt while trying to blackmail an unprecedented and unnecessary if not self-defeating appropriation from the Congress.

I can think of those you would find "reliable," like jail officials and con men. I can think of no one who could with honesty have told you what you say. I can think of no decent standard by which you would say it without investigation. On its face this is a senseless story, whatever one of the contradictory forms you elect to defend. Not that you are man enough to defend any. Were you such a man you would not have been able to bring yourself to so complete an abandonment of decency or responsibility.

If you believe sincerely and care naught for fact you are a genuine Bilbo. He and his were nothing if not sincere believers in all their wrong and wrong-headedness.

Moreover, neither you nor any of those the newspapers call "investigators" made even a perfunctory effort to determine whether this story is even possible. The labor of lifting a telephone is too great if it does not get you on the tube or in headlines. How you get there tortures your conscience to the same degree it tortured Hoover.

You follow in your own earlier and noble tradition as friend and clergyman going back to when Dr. King was killed. Then you would say not a word, lift not a finger, return no phone call, respond to no mutual friend. What courage! What a manly exemplification of love and manhood! Blondel reincarnated, with a different King.

I wrote you once when in your self-seeking you had made a jackass of yourself and defamed the memory of a great man while besmirching his survivors. You were without response. I therefore do not contaminate your adventures in the worst of white politics with either fact or reason. While you lust for the soft weakness of the lady justice there is no help. Not for you. Only the help you give those who killed Dr. King and those who saw to it that crime would remain unsolved and unpunished.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg