

Route 12 - Old Receiver Road
Frederick, Md. 21701

April 5, 1977

Congressman Gene Snyder
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Congressman Snyder:

If I cannot conceive of a Congressman who would want to mislead the people of the country, even less one who would want any misapprehensions about the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (certainly there cannot be one who would exploit so great a tragedy for personal attention), I regret very much that, prior to your March 30 remarks during the debate on the extension of the House assassins committee, you did not do the obvious: phone me.

You spoke on the floor March 30. You glowed from the tube before that. Yet the letter written you by Blank, aka Clifton Baird, was of March 12. It gave you my phone number.

If you have given any thought to the letter of "Blank" (aka Baird) to you, it might have occurred to you that what he attributes to me could not in any way relate to or be responsive to anything he wrote you. In fact, it is unreal.

It is so unreal that his letter omits the date of the alleged offer of \$500,000 to him by the FBI to assassinate Dr. King.

That was 1965. Dr. King was killed in 1968.

What distinguishes the Blank/Baird assassination plot against Dr. King from the thousands of others is that Blank/Baird's was not a plot at all.

Whether or not one approves all police methods - and if Mr. Blank/Baird had written you as he could have, you'd have known there was a dire police problem - what he reported to me is no more than a normal police testing of a suspect when there was frightful murderous violence the police wanted to restrain. Dynamite, a word not in the letter to you, has killed countless innocent Americans. Your needlessly anonymous informer was suspected of murderous dynamiting, not of conspiring to kill Dr. King.

In the letter I have he does not attribute any offer to the FBI. These obviously was no offer. It was a normal police effort to learn fact. You defamed the Bureau from coast-to-coast, without even a phone call.

You did not phone "the (Blank) Police Department," aka Louisville. You did not check at "(Blank) where I (Blank/Baird) was born and raised," aka Bowling Green.

There appears to have been no need, in your mind, for you to inform your colleagues about what was going on in your State at that time. You were careful not to state the time - three years before the King assassination.

Mr. Blank/Baird eased you around this by claiming that "In the month previous to the King assassination I was threatened seven or eight times." His memory improves with time, Congressional interest and the euphoria of national attention. This is not in his 1975-letter about his 1965 experiences.

When you received Mr. Blank/Baird's letter, instead of checking at all, you "sent it in a sealed envelope, hand-carried, to the then chairman of this committee and the ranking minority member."

Considering that none of this was secret, your caution was not in vain. It did get you on coast-to-coast TV.

Once they received it from you, the recipients also had no need for checking. Not even the former FBI agent who is ranking minority member.

Fortunately, little old ladies do not await Members of the Congress to lead them across the streets. Otherwise, from your own account, little old ladies would be an endangered species.

Now that the national harm has been accomplished, could you spare a moment for what outside of headlines, TV tubes and the Congress is described as thought? If Mr. Blank/Baird discussed a threat against Dr. King and an offer allegedly made to him with me, how could I possibly ask what business it was of his? An alleged offer to him very obviously is his business. The same is true of where was he going to hide if he did anything with the tapes. The number is multiplied from the time of his letter. His letter did not say that one tape was mysteriously stolen. He wrote in 1975 that one was worthless. (No doubt the credentials of "solid citizen" from Mr. Devine's "check.")

The question I had in 1975, it seems to me, is not inappropriate for solons in 1977: How is this 1965 Louisville claim relevant to the 1968 Memphis killing?

Thousands of threats were made against Dr. King. Do you believe that all of those who made threats or to whom threats were attributed did kill Dr. King? All of them?

If the assassins committee is to investigate all threats, can you tax us enough to pay for it? Can it be completed in your lifetime?

If you are going to include what from Mr. Blank/Baird's first account is not even a threat, you will have come as close as one can to political perpetual motion. On camera, that is.

The country would be better served if one subcommittee explored the number of fairies who could dance on the point of a needle and the second subcommittee investigated the number who could fit in its eye.

Now that Dr. King is safely dead, I do commend you on the high principle you expressed - once he was safely dead - that although you were not in sympathy with his "political philosophy" that "has nothing to do with the man's fight to his philosophy."

The response of Delegate Fauntroy assured you, "as our report indicates, it is among several leads that ... we are presently pursuing."

In six months of diligent pursuit, your committee only now claims to be nearing a "threshold." It has corroborated nothing. It has caught up with nothing. Not yet, may I add, with the basic facts in either crime.

When you could summon "thank the gentleman" after Delegate Fauntroy's description of your adventure as "an instructive example" of "seriousness" I believe my reputation will be safer without any retraction or apology from you in the Record.

Truly,

Harold Weisberg