

Route 12 - Old Receiver Road
Frederick, Md. 21701

April 19, 1978

Mr. G. Robert Blakey
Chief Counsel and Director
Select Committee on Assassinations
3331 House Office Bldg., Annex 2
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Mr. Blakey:

Your letter of April 18 says that you have decided against interviewing me about the King assassination "because I was not sure in my own mind what would be proper in the light of your expressed reservations" and "because on reflection I do not think it would be appropriate for Mr. Eberhardt and me to discuss the Ray case with you."

You also say of my having been the investigator on the case that is "a relationship that I was not aware of when I called you."

You conclude with your opinion of the committee's work and intent, "that the truth, insofar as it is humanly possible, be established."

Each of these three quotations, separately and in combination, reinforce the strong reservations I have had about your committee from the time of my earliest experiences with it.

That you as general counsel could have been unaware of these experiences and that I was the investigator whose work led to the successful habeas corpus petition and that I did the investigating - and much more than that - for and during the two weeks of evidentiary hearings in October 1974 is truly surprising to me.

Aside from what it reflects about the committee, it leaves me wondering what your function as general counsel is and whether there is any internal communication on your staff, more since you personally appear to have removed from it the closest thing you had to subject experts.

My "expressed reservations" when we spoke were not limited to the obligation I bear James Earl Ray. I also referred to my earlier experiences with your committee.

There is only one way in which the committee could intrude upon these obligations. You spell it out, without intending to, in your own description of your purposes, "to discuss the Ray case..."

You neither said nor suggested the subject would be the King assassination. You reflect what I originally and fruitlessly - and I add repeatedly - protested, the committee's presumption of Mr. Ray's guilt.

While I am not privy to all your committee has done, I do have both dependable information and a number of unconfirmed reports. I know of nothing it has done that I would describe as an unprejudiced investigation of the King assassination.

(The secrecy you imposed served to prevent exposure of the committee's adventuring and irresponsibility. It did not prevent publication of the unconfirmed or that which could be harmful to individuals. It also served to make the Members more dependent upon you, including from loss of the proper and necessary adversary role of the press.)

I am aware of what I regard as nutty and wasteful explorations of the inherently incredible by the committee - and of the harm to individuals the committee is responsible for.

I am also aware that from the first the committee has avoided the corpus delicti evidence in which I sought to interest it. This was prior to the establishing of the committee, during the period it was being voted and approved and immediately thereafter. While I do not believe that any of those with whom I had these conferences remain on the staff under you, I am confident that all will recall more than that I made such offers and explained their need. Two phoned me after the committee's first distress to lament that my cautions about the pitfalls the committee dug for itself turned out to be the reality.

It is the committee's preconception of guilt, not my relationship with Mr. Ray, that perpetuates the conflict of interest over which I was compelled to break with your committee during Richard A. Sprague's early tenure.

These preconceptions were then formalized in what for lack of a more appropriate description is called the committee's report. They are formalized in the public statements of Members on and off the floor of the House. They are explicit or inherent in everything the committee has done and has not done of which I have any knowledge.

For these and for other reasons I have no basis for believing that the committee's intent or work mean that it will "go forward and that the truth, insofar as it is humanly possible, be established."

On the JFK assassination, I have done most of the original and responsible work, have published more than anyone else, have filed and won more FOIA cases than anyone else, and prior to the establishing of your committee was certified to a federal court by the Department of Justice as knowing more about the JFK assassination and its official investigation than anyone in the FBI.

Despite this, despite my ~~offers~~ offers to the committee of extensive assistance with the JFK part of its work, these offers were rebuffed. I was not asked for a single record, not for any account of any of my experiences, not even about the records I might make available.

Only once was there any interest in what I might be able to do for the committee. That was when you gathered together what you considered the responsible critics for a brainstorming on various theories. Even if I had not had my bad prior experiences with your committee and its substitution of preconceptions for impartial investigations, I still would have declined to participate in its idle theorizing. Without what is possible for the corpus delicti being established in advance, such theorizing is at best immature and irresponsible.

Neither you nor the committee appears to have learned the lesson of Santayana's wisdom, that he who fails to learn from the past is doomed to relive it.

Unfortunately, the pain will not be yours and the committee's. It will again be a national anguish, another failing of our basic institutions in time of need and crisis.

This belief is particularly painful to me because I was the first to place public hope on the Congress, in the conclusion of my first book, which dates to mid-February 1965. You and your committee have destroyed that hope and any basis for such a hope for as far as I can hope to last into the future.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg