

HSCA - Blakey

Mr. G. Robert Blakey
House Select Committee on Assassinations
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

10/30/78

Dear Mr. Blakey,

In writing you two days ago I pointed out that you are really very amateurish when you try to be self-serving. In today's mail and by a phone call I did not expect I learned more about this today.

You may remember that when you called John Ray to an executive session Jim Lesar asked me to be present for any help I might provide. You had me put out of the room. When Mr. Lesar went to examine the transcripts of prior executive sessions involving his clients he made notes. You had his notes physically taken away from him. These procedures are hardly calculated to enable correction of any error in the transcripts. Except for those many ones your Members made, those I think may not be exactly accidental "errors."

What Members know and believe is largely controlled by the staff because the Members are too busy to be active investigators. With the kind of dictatorial control you exercise this means what you see to it what they do and do not know and can believe. You know the committee might not survive the loss of another chief counsel. I understand you have reminded the committee of this.

Not having an authentic subject expert present in the hearing room with John Ray and Carol Pepper limited the correction of committee errors Mr. Lesar could make. If you don't suppress that transcript it will reflect enough. Not letting Mr. Lesar have even his notes served the same purpose.

This is to say that your real purpose had no relationship to any legitimate need to protect the privacy of either Mrs. Pepper or John Ray, both of whom wanted me to be present, as their counsel had asked. Nor could it keep secret anything that came up. All three discussed those matters with me.

In today's mail, I have the second (at least) committee executive session transcript, each copy given officially to the person who provided the copy by the committee. I have nothing stolen from you and no means of obtaining anything like that.

Also in today's mail I have 10 or 12 pages of FBI records your committee, officially, gave to the person who provided these records to me. Now it also happens that the FBI did not want these records out because it withheld them from me in one of my FOIA cases in which they are relevant.

Secrecy is your selective practise. You keep things from me to cover yourself and the misdirection of the committee you have succeeded in pulling off. Likewise with your refusal to let me have copies of what you have already put into the public domain. With that you have another possible purpose, service to those to whom you owe much - those I sue under FOIA. Not what one would expect of a genuine and sincere professor of the law, which would be to let the adversary process work.

The phone call was from Oliver Patterson. I had written him to ask about his having a copy of a letter I wrote Jerry Ray. Your informant, if you were not aware of it, came here just before his executive session testimony. He had gone to Georgia to transport Jerry Ray to Washington. The public record holds nothing that leads me to believe that you will regard the coming of a committee informant to my home as improper, although I am the cited source of several stories of factual criticism of the committee.

Mr. Patterson informs me that all of what belonged to him and to Jerry Ray was in the trunk of his car, that he was met in Washington by your Mel Waxman and Conrad Baetz, that these two had the keys to the trunk, opened it and removed what interested them and that it included my letter. They handed my letter to Mr. Patterson to read to them, all the time pretending disinterest and never once stopping his reading of this letter in which I also express opinions about your committee.

I believe Mr. Patterson. Thus I believe him when he tells me that he did not give the committee prints of pictures he took when he was here. But my, my, how it does look - for a professor of law to believe that Congress serves proper legislative purposes by using informants and then these informants intercept private communications involving an outspoken critic of you and your committee - and even takes photographs of him and Jerry Ray together.

Mr. Patterson is unclear on the details of the backgrounding on me he was given by your staff. I'd appreciate hearing from you if you can ascribe a proper legislative purpose to any official backgrounding of an informant with me the subject of that backgrounding.

Mr. Patterson is quite clear that Mr. Baetz told him I am a "paranoid, senile old man." From what I have heard about Mr. Baetz, going back to his reported assignment to the cuspidor detail in the Madison County Sheriff's office, what would disturb me is any favorable opinion he might express. But I do wonder about the propriety of any backgrounding relating to any member of the prior James Earl Ray defense team. If you do not want to offer comment as a professor of law then I would welcome it from the Chief Counsel and Director of the committee. Unless, of course, you would prefer to present all of this to the chairman who might respond as chairman.

In any event, it now is quite clear that your refusal of copies of public records you have published and will publish is pretextual and thus is inappropriate for either a professor of law or a committee counsel and director. It also is apparent that in this you cover yourself and those to whom you owe much, those who withheld under Freedom of Information and court process. It likewise is without any doubt that you have given confidential FBI records away, as I shall inform the Department, to which I will also provide copies.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

P.S. Mr. Patterson's memory is incomplete or Mr. Baetz remembered less of the direct quotation of Mark Lane on me as a "paranoid, senile old man" than Lane generally uses. There was a time, as you must know, when he and you-all were in bed together. So to speak. Particularly with your subcommittee chairman whose TV appearances Lane helped him prepare. Of the other descriptions my favorite is cantankerous.