

Chron(JFK)

Mr. E. Ross Buckley  
Criminal Division  
Department of Justice  
Wash., D.C. 20535

5/26/80

Dear Mr. Buckley,

Your letter of the 23rd is helpful and I thank you for it.

I presume you will also include a schedule with each coming batch and will indicate the claims made for any complete withholdings.

You say (b)(5) was claimed for "candid comments about Mr. Thomson." You also say that in your opinion it is applicable. I suggest that to eliminate what I believe is inappropriate use of this exemption you consult with Mr. Shea before all the records are processed rather than afterward, which could mean a considerable amount of extra work if I am correct, as my reading of recent appeals court decisions persuades me I am.

It has not been policy to withhold "candid comments" about those critical of the official account of the JFK assassination. Some pretty terrible distortions and outright fabrications about me were released. The official position is that we are all public figures. I can not easily believe that these comments about the nutty Thomson are more defamatory than what has been disclosed about other critics. I believe Mr. Shea will confirm this if you phone him and eliminate that problem as much in advance as is possible.

If you are willing, I believe I can help you with some of these matters. An extraordinary amount of information is now public because the volume of records about that most significant event is great. I remember a fair amount and can probably provide much of what is available that I do not remember. If in the course of processing you keep a list of names for which you consider a (7)(C) claim and merely mention the names to me by phone, without providing any details, you violate no privacy and perhaps I can provide information. I have a competent young woman who assists me part-time. She can consult my files and we can provide you with what they reflect, including citations of what the Department has disclosed about many.

You may also want to remember that the Warren Commission published three indices. In its Report there is one of witnesses and another of proper names in the Report. In Volume 15 it has all the proper names mentioned in the testimony. The National Archives has the Commission's name files. These will contain all that the Commission disclosed about these people.

The FBI has copies of a selective index of the Commission's public record, which includes the several volumes of exhibits, prepared by Mrs. Sylvia Heaghar. She has updated it to include some of the published material of the recent House Select Committee on Assassinations. It is to be published by Scarecrow Press if it has not yet been published. Mr. Shea can lend you typed copies of parts of the HSCA section which I gave him or I can lend you my copies.

I do believe that you can save much work and eliminate many problems by not putting them over for the overloaded appeals office to face.

Sincerely

Harold Weisberg