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Auckland, 18/04/92

Harold Weisberg
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Dear Harold Weisberg,

Your letter of 3rd April, which I received last Tuesday 14th April, was a great surprise, and pleasure, for me. I had not expected to hear from you so soon, and I had not dared to hope for an answer so full of interesting detail and as personal as your letter was. I am warmed by the kindly tone of your letter, by the time and effort you gave to somebody like me with almost no knowledge of this subject, and I feel very honoured indeed.

It is going into Autumn here now, and as I write this (on a chilly Saturday morning) my wife and two children, Emma aged 10 and Karl aged 3, are working on our front lawn raking up piles of leaves that have fallen from the deciduous trees. I mention this with the thought that when you wrote me your letter it was typed with fingers split by Winter's cold. It has been unseasonably cold here, our Autumn temperatures started in February this year, normally a hot month in NZ. While the rest of the world heats up, New Zealand is getting colder. The normal wind patterns across the Pacific have been changing because of higher average annual temperatures over the last ten years or so. These changed wind patterns have meant instead of warm winds blowing down from the NW during Summer and early Autumn, this year the prevailing winds are blowing from the SW bringing cold wind from the Antarctic up to our latitude. It is great for skiers, snowfalls are earlier and heavier and stay longer than in the past. I thought this may interest you, as far as NZ is concerned, 'Greenhouse Warming' is lowering temperatures, not raising them.

I know well what it means to have to elevate your legs, though in my case it was only one leg. Just after Christmas last year I fell and broke two shin bones right above the ankle, I had a spiral fracture to the fibula and a straight fracture to the base of the tibia (right across the middle of the knobby end that fits into the ankle joint). In the fall I managed to tear most of the ligaments and membranes that are in place around the ankle and lower leg bones. I enclose a photo of myself taken on 18th February, the day before my plaster cast came off. I spent most of January with my left leg up on a pile of cushions, and for much of February and March too. I am still having to get my leg up on a daily basis to help ease the swelling in the ankle when I walk around on it too much.

Soon after receiving your letter I was on the phone to the Auckland Central Library and I had a fair bit of luck chasing books you had mentioned. Both Meagher and Roffman were held by the Central Library and I picked up Roffman that same day. Meagher is coming in from one of the suburban libraries and will be ready for collection after Easter. Most of your own books were listed on the main accession file, though only "Frame Up" was immediately available. I was pleased to see that copies of your "WHITEWASH" volumes had been bought by the library, but sadly all except WHITEWASH III were listed as 'missing', which is synonymous with 'stolen'. WHITEWASH III was shown out on loan and I reserved it. I found Roffman very interesting, and very informative. I am now reading it again. By a stroke of good fortune I was able to pick up from the return bins a copy of "Conspiracy" by Anthony Summers. I took this home with me and finished reading it last night, a good book methinks.

I must say that I was surprised to read in your letter that my view of the Tippit killing was not one shared by most people. To my mind it would have been rather useless for anybody to frame Oswald in the way he was 'set up' without arranging a sure and quick way of having him killed soon after. It seems entirely predictable, like night following day, the killer(s) of Kennedy must have gone straight to the area near where Oswald boarded and Tippit was killed. Tippit was killed surely because he happened to be in the wrong (or right?) place at that time. It could have been any innocent person killed by 'somebody' fitting Oswald's description to bring the hordes of Police zeroing in on that area, but none better for 'their' purposes to murder than a police officer, unless instead of one it had been two police officers murdered.

Something occurred to me while I was reading Summer's book concerning the Tippit murder. Summer (lower p.119) talks about 'characteristics' of automatic pistol and revolver rounds but this is not a strong enough word to describe the differences. To anybody familiar with handguns, types of ammunition used by revolvers and automatic pistols are as unlike as chalk and cheese. Revolver rounds have a distinct rim around the base of the cartridge while ammunition used in automatic pistols is rimless. Nobody who uses a handgun could ever confuse the two. They are quite different- they feel different to handle, and the two have different outlines or profiles. It is likely that Summer himself was not a person who had firsthand knowledge of handguns or ammunition.

I am greatly relieved to read your opinion of Scheim's and Davis' books. It was my feeling as I read these two books that the evidence put forward to make the case for a Mafia contract killing was very thin, and circumstantial. I thought- if this is all there is, maybe I should read the Warren Commission.

Yes, I would be happy to have your books, and I wish to buy copies as under;

TITLE	COST
Post Mortem	\$ 10.00
Frame-Up	10.00
Whitewash I	25.00
Whitewash II	6.00
Whitewash III	6.00
Photographic Whitewash	8.00
Oswald in New Orleans	25.00
	<hr/>
	\$ 90.00

If it is no bother,
I would be happy
to have copies
signed by you!

I have added \$50.00 for surface postage, which I hope is way above what it will actually cost you to send the books. Please accept whatever is unused as a small gift.

This matter of the Kennedy assassination has made me rethink somewhat thoughts I have on what sort of world my children will be growing into in the next Century. Kennedy apparently had good reason to ponder the source of his own power and authority- was it the President who made the major decisions, or was it all those who provided the President with the information upon which he based his policy decisions. I read somewhere once in a historical journal that Kennedy was faced with resolving this question after the Bay of Pigs invasion. I do not know the primary source for this observation.

So, I think it is just as crucial a discovery for common people like you and me to make, to find out where this real power resides in our society. Obviously, the unknown people who organised and carried out the assassination of Kennedy not only had access to all the means needed to do such a thing, they must have had the confidence of getting away with it, and an arrogant sense of aggrieved righteousness for motivation. The implications of such action by unknown people like these almost takes my breath away. As I heard you say interviewed in Nigel Turner's programme, the world of the 1960's deserved the 'peace dividend' that should have been the outcome of the end of World War II and the fruits of the alternatives Kennedy was looking at taking in the wake of the Cuban Missile Crisis, including a pullout from Vietnam, and everything that would have come from those decisions were denied to the whole world. This does make the assassination of Kennedy one of the great pivotal events of the history of this century, as a result of this one event everything else happening in the world was in its turn forced to change too. Nobody has any right to do such a thing and not be held responsible, and not be accountable, before the world. But we know that such a thing has happened.

While I am interested in knowing who murdered Kennedy, and how it was done, I find myself thinking more now of the social and political and historical implications of the assassination.

To deal with one thing at a time here, and it involves some flights of fancy taking ideas and seeing how they may fit together. Who were they? It would have had to have been a group of people with easy access to the secret or hidden sources of power in US society, surveillance, through the CIA or the FBI or the Secret Service, or one of the branches of military intelligence -not by any of these organisations themselves, but by individuals within one or more of these or a similar organisation, or close enough and influential enough to be able to tap into its resources. It would not have needed a large group, say no more than six at most steering the whole thing. They would have known and understood intimately the whole investigative system that would come into play in the wake of the assassination, how it worked, how it could be manipulated, and interfered with. They could have pulled red herrings across every path, they could have randomly destroyed or misfiled all nature of reports and records regardless of whether they were involved with their actions or not, they could have seen to it that misinformation and disinformation were fed into the hands of those people within the parent organisations not aware of the actions of the small group, and even those people who were within the orbit of the group, accessories after the fact or whatever they are called, might not have had much of an idea of the larger picture at all, and 'they' probably had at least one other person like Oswald who could have been 'set up', and held ready just in case Oswald could not be used on the day. They would have counted on the tacit if rather passive support of a large number in the establishment who would not wish to rock the boat when the heat came on. I wonder if the actual assassins, those who fired the bullets, are still alive today. If I look at the few names who seem to come closest to being somehow involved with the actions of the 'group', albeit on the outer fringes like David Ferrie and Guy Banister who must have known of Oswald's undercover roles, I still cannot see any easy answers. This earlier association is still not enough to link them with the assassination is it? What was David Ferrie doing driving round Texas on the weekend following the assassination for example. It makes no sense. It may well have had nothing at all to do with the assassination. It is all like a big jigsaw puzzle. I wonder if people like Banister and Ferrie knew themselves the full significance of what they was doing? If Jack Ruby was the backup person to be used to silence Oswald if he was taken alive, and if Ruby was considered for this role well in advance of the assassination, this level of forward planning sends a shiver down my spine, twenty-nine years and 9,000 miles away. Who were these people? What was the source of their power? Where are they today? Aren't you ever afraid?

I wonder, could J. Edgar Hoover have been one of the group of powerful people (men?) who either initiated moves to have Kennedy assassinated, or turned a blind eye to what they must have had at least some inkling of? Or Dulles? Who then? (Rhetorical questions only, I do not expect you to know!)

You say in your letter that there is no evidence to support the notion that a shot was fired from somewhere up behind the grassy knoll. Is this still the case? I thought the evidence of all the people in the crowd who thought a shot came from there, including those who saw a puff of smoke or who smelled gunpowder, did point to a shot being fired from there. In my letter I said I was not sure whether the Moorman photo was now accepted as confirming the presence of a gunman, as it seemed the images in question from that area of the photo might be open to differing interpretations.

About my thoughts on the next century- I fear the world is not exactly being guided in any particular direction today, and yet there is a definite momentum of change building up that makes it more important each passing year that humankind take some important decisions for the future. You only have to live today in a small but developed country like New Zealand, more isolated than any other country in the whole world, and more dependent than any other country in the world on trade, to see where the ever growing number of trade barriers between countries is taking us, and the world. Everything this country has developed over the last two hundred years, and I mean the social and political partnership of the Polynesian and European inhabitants in New Zealand as well, is under stress as this country looks at being forced out of world markets for its agricultural products by European and US trade practices, dumping and protectionism. And this is only one small country.

I wish my children to grow up in a free world, one with full freedom for their ideas and intellect, and in a culture that respects all races and all differences in other human beings. However since starting to read on the assassination of Kennedy this year, I cannot help but wonder what else the people like those who murdered Kennedy have done that we do not yet know about. Is human history in the next century going to be limited by people such as these.

I think I have written enough, and more than enough. I hope one day you will find time to write back back to me again. I look forward to receiving your books, and of course to reading them. If I lived a little closer to you, it would give me enormous pleasure to be able to visit you, and talk with you, and share a cup of tea and a biscuit with you. There is so much I would wish to hear from you.

With thanks, and warm regards,

Pat McLeish