

Dal McGuirk
93 Pah Road
Epsom
Auckland 1003
New Zealand

copy for Harold

24/04/94

Prof. David Wrone
1518 Blackberry Lane
Stevens Point
WI 54481
U.S.A.

Dear David Wrone

Many many thanks for your kind letter of 30/03/94. I know from what Harold tells me how busy you are, and I appreciate that you took time to share with me your ideas on the subject of teaching the JFK Assassination. Thank YOU.

Please excuse the time it has taken me to acknowledge receipt of your letter. Knowing from Harold about your interest in North American Indian culture, I went hunting for a particular calender to send you I had seen in the shops before Christmas last year. This 1994 calender featured illustrations of pre-European contact period Maori artefacts and objects of art. I could not find any shops with unsold stock but in the end I tracked the publisher down, a small alternative publishing house in a backstreet area of old Auckland. The result of my hunting, the calender 'Maramataka', I am posting to you by separate airmail. I am sure you will find the illustrations of interest, and beauty. Their quality is such that if you wished it you could have them framed as a permanent display.

I agree with you that the assassination should not be taught in any vacuum that separates it from the context of twentieth century social/national values, and our wider notions of human civilisation. Indeed, I am gratified to find that much of my own thinking on what my course should touch on appears to parallel your ideas. I am mindful of the need to stay firmly connected with what is indisputably factual and a matter of public record. I have Harold to thank for impressing on me a sense of the vast gulf between what is real and what is not real in reading on the assassination.

Like you, I too would use Harold Weisberg as an example of what form the citizen's response should ideally take in the aftermath of the assassination. In addition to what I can lift from his books I also have our correspondence to refer to.

I was able to relate to most of your suggested outline, though in a few instances my personal area of reference fell short of yours. If you should have time and inclination to write back at some stage, I would very much like to know the substance of your criticism of David Lifton. I suspect that there is some historical (sic) context here I am unaware of. I anticipate that I may be asked to produce for my students some concrete and factual riposte to Lifton, and I feel I do not know enough to do this convincingly. My own disbelief in Lifton's theories derives from my total reading on the subject, especially my close study of Weisberg, Roffman and Meagher. I have made no such study of Lifton (I know only the bones of his book). Hence my feelings of inadequacy in being able to effectively counter his theories. Any help you can provide in this regard would be much appreciated.

Again, many thanks for your support and guidance. I shall keep you informed of my progress. Should my proposal come into being next year I shall send you copies of my course material. I hope to be teaching it through the 'Centre of Continuing Education', a largely adult learning area operated by the university catering to a range of interests not offered within formal academic programmes. That means I would not have to worry about making any sort of assessment of students' work during or after the course, only delivering a standard evaluation made by students on the appropriateness of my content and presentation.

With best wishes, and greetings from New Zealand-Aotearoa.
Take good care.

Yours faithfully,

Dal McGuirk