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Rankin Paper
Box 22
1964

July 10, 1964

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mr. J. Lee Rankin

FROM: David W. Belin

SUBJECT: Comments and Suggestions--Chapter 3--6/26/64 Draft

Case Suspect

Brennan as Key Witness

File Oswald
Case Suspect

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1. As I wrote in my letter of July 7, and as I partially explained in my July 10 conference with you, I have great objection to the organization of chapters 3 and 4. The testimony of the eyewitnesses, as well as the witnesses on the fifth floor, loses most of its effectiveness as part of the proof that Oswald was the assassin. Looking at the case from the viewpoint of a trial lawyer arguing to a jury and from the viewpoint of an appellate lawyer arguing before a supreme court, I believe that we have overproved the "place from which the shots were fired" to the detriment of our proof on the "determination of Oswald as the assassin."

A much more effective presentation could be made by having chapter 3 limited to the examination of the Presidential automobile, the nature and characteristics of the bullet wounds, and the trajectory of the shots. There should be only brief reference to the eyewitnesses of the assassination and the ballistic evidence. These later subjects should be discussed as a part of the evidence pointing to Oswald as the assassin. Not only would this make a better case against Oswald, but we would offer a situation of each chapter reinforcing the other. In our conference this morning when I analogized to reinforcing concretely, this is the type of technique to which I referred.

There has been far too much concern about the attacks by Lane, Buchanan, and others alleging that the shots came from the overpass. We know to an absolute certainty that this is not true, and the potential weakness of our case is, not the actual standpoint of whether or not the shots came from the overpass, but, rather, who pulled the trigger of the weapon.

Finally, I would point to the first paragraph on page 2 of chapter 3, where the next-to-the-last sentence states: "The wounds on President Kennedy and Governor Connally, supported by the holes in their clothing, prove that the shots came from the rear and overhead." I believe that nothing more is needed in this chapter other than the subject matter of the examination of the automobile and all of the material pertaining to the trajectory of the shots. If these matters prove that the shots came from the rear and behind, let us then reinforce our findings with the eyewitnesses' and ballistic testimony in chapter 4, which in turn will be reinforced by our findings in the revised chapter 3.

In short, it
you show
came from
a helicopter
for
Oswald
was in
the
chopper