

2 September 1965

Mr Herbert C Morton
Director of Publications
The Brookings Institution
1775 Massachusetts Avenue N W
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cc:—William B Harvey NYU Press
—William Bridgwater, Columbia University Press
—Thomas J Wilson, Harvard University Press
—Director, Center for the Study of
Democratic Institutions, Box 4068, Santa Barbara
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Dear Mr Morton,

The assassination of President Kennedy is commanding the attention of scholars from many disciplines—law, government, sociology, criminology, psychiatry, and other sciences. The small regiment of researchers who are already at work will be augmented by increasing numbers with the passage of time, as this immense incomprehensible tragedy is seen in perspectives other than immediacy and as the long-term impact on the American nation becomes increasingly discernible.

The Warren Commission, in its Report and twenty-six volumes of Hearings and Exhibits, has provided a mass of data which is probably unprecedented in the annals of fact-finding investigation. It is undeniable, however, that the value of these reference documents is greatly impaired by the lack of a subject index by means of which scholars can trace readily all of the testimony, documents, and conclusions on any single aspect of the assassination and subsequent events. My personal experience with the Hearings and Exhibits has been one of frustration and considerable loss of time in hunting through each of the twenty-six volumes, without certainty that I had in fact located every relevant item on any single aspect of the case. This difficulty led me to prepare notes, which ultimately grew into a highly detailed and comprehensive subject index.

A professor of law at Oxford University, a professor of government at New York University, and other scholars with whom I am in contact have indicated their belief that the subject index will be of great value to contemporary and future students of the assassination. I am convinced that study of the case is gravely handicapped by the lack of such an index

and that the index can be of profound value as a supplement to the Hearings and Exhibits, in libraries and other institutions or in the hands of private persons. To my knowledge, no other researcher has compiled such an index nor plans to undertake such onerous and overwhelming a project.

I am very desirous of making available to all students of the Hearings and Exhibits the subject index, to which I have devoted some eight months of effort. I hope very much that you will be willing to consider the possibility of publishing this index, as a necessary tool for researchers and historians. I take the liberty of enclosing a list of the subjects and subclassifications included in the index, apologizing for the imperfections of the photocopies. Under each of the headings, which number something over four hundred, the index provides references to the relevant testimony (citing volume and page numbers as well as the name of the witness) and the relevant documents in each of the twenty-six volumes, and in the Warren Report. These references incorporate but extend substantially beyond the footnotes provided in the Report. On one subject, on which the Report cites sixteen sources, the subject index provides an additional eighteen or a total of thirty-four sources.

I should be grateful for your interest and views, and for any advice which you may be willing to offer as to means by which the index can be disseminated as soon as possible to centers of learning and research.

Yours sincerely,

Sylvia Meagher

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