

4 May 1970

Dear Fred,

Thank you for sending me your CBS/LBJ dossier. The 4/24/63 Dallas Times-Herald story is a thunderclap. To the best of my recollection, I have never seen it before, but I have definitely heard or read "At least wait until next November before you shoot him down" as a quotation from Chairman Johnson. (I agree with you that it was the world's worst metaphor, or maybe a Freudian slip, not a cat let out of the bag. Reminds me of Mario Proccacino, our recent mayoral candidate, assuring an audience with regard to his little-known running-mate, "He grows on you, like cancer.")

I don't know quite how to evaluate this gross discrepancy of dates for the planning of the Texas trip--maybe I'm too demoralized by the events of the last week and the murder of four students today on an Ohio campus. Your presentation of marshalled facts to CBS was admirable but I am sure that you were not really surprised by the bland non-responsive replies.

Kronkite, like so many of his TV fellow-eminences who are supposed to be reportorial whiz-kids but are not, proved his lack of alertness and/or his reluctance to put LBJ on the spot. (At least three hardened professional radio/TV interviewers on this coast let that whore Jim Bishop relate at tiresome length how Marina locked Lee into the bathroom, without having the wits to realize that you can lock yourself into a bathroom from the inside but not lock someone else in from the outside.) If you watched the LBJ interview on Saturday, you remember that LBJ acknowledged that he was worried about what might happen in Dallas, because of what had happened to him and Ladybird and later to Adlai Stevenson. Worried, clearly, about the Dallas citizenry of the ultra-right. But asked to describe what went through his mind when he heard the shots, and when he learned that JFK was dead, LBJ said that his instant fear was that there might be an "international conspiracy"!!! That's some transition--but brilliant Kronkite didn't notice the deranged illogic, or didn't care to challenge Johnson.

As baffling as the conflicting dates of the planning of the trip is LBJ's about-face in the original taping in admitting for the first time that he did not buy the lone assassin or the WR, and then his equally baffling deletion, which he surely knew would leak out all over the place. I suspect that he is only investing in a second line of defense, in case it should become utterly impossible to maintain the "lone assassin" fiction--in which case, he will fall back on a Castro/Communist plot. Meanwhile, by having his remarks deleted, he need not have any confrontation with reporters or with his faithful servant Earl Warren, who may know that he has been doublecrossed and impugned but who cannot tax LBJ with it, since LBJ literally said nothing on TV against the WR. What's that old saying again, about honor among thieves, and the solidarity of accessories to a crime...?

I am enclosing a copy of an item you may have missed, for your "Better Late than Never" file. Best personal regards, and congratulations on your find in the Dallas Times Herald.

Sincerely,