

22 June 1971

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"CTIA Newsletters"*

Dear Jim,

The three items discussed in your letter of 20 May 1971 finally arrived yesterday, in a manila envelope postmarked "Washington June 7'71" and marked "Printed Matter"—from which I assume that this is the original "lost" mailing and not the second set of copies which you intended to send. Curious and more curious! Did the second "lost" envelope also turn up, in Berkeley?

I have read the memorandum on the FBI and the assassination, on which you asked me to comment. Generally speaking, I find it an effective summation, reasonably comprehensive, and accurate to the best of my knowledge and/or recollection of the published or unpublished documents (which I do not have at hand). As you know, HW has kept me informed of his extreme objections to a memorandum prepared in the Committee's office intended for Hale Boggs. I do not know if the memorandum you sent me is the same one but if it is, I do not see grounds for alarm or anguish, while at the same time I concede that I am not so penetrating as HW and may be overlooking some of the tactical or strategical implications which so exercised him.

Just a few minor comments. I am not sure that the last sentence of paragraph 1 is entirely accurate. As I recall it, the disclosure of part of the FBI Summary Report (in Inquest) was headlined in the Washington Post (of 30 May 1966, give or take a day) on the front page, with full-page or prominent coverage in many other newspapers and in news magazines and other periodicals, followed by a rash of editorials, commentaries, interviews, and even fatuous or misleading "explanations" by spokesmen for the WR and/or the FBI, even by Hoover Himself. The story retained news interest for a number of months, during which increasing complacency did develop, and was then displaced by new and startling headlines out of New Orleans. Thus, a sizable number of the critics themselves, by giving credence to Garrison and aiding and abetting him long after he had any legitimate claim on their support, encouraged the news media to abandon discussion of the genuine evidence and to feast on the chimera and sophistry of the Clay Shaw "case". For those reasons, I suggest that you might reframe the sentence and delete the phrase "the indolence of the news media".

The first sentence of paragraph 5 inadvertently is misleading, and should say, rather, "The FBI never interviewed or even identified several of the persons..."

On page 3, paragraph 2, just an incidental and personal comment: Although I know of no one who agrees with me, I have seriously questioned the allegation that Oswald asked for an FBI agent to be summoned. I know that the contemporaneous documents (such as Quigley's report) seem to

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establish that Oswald was interviewed at his own request. Yet I still believe it possible that the New Orleans police "intelligence" squad routinely called in the FBI in any arrest of "radicals" but let the record indicate--since the FBI is not supposed to act as a political police force or to enter into purely local jurisdictions in such petty arrests as for disturbance of the peace, etc.--that the FBI intervened at the request of the person in custody. I wrote all this up in a paper which comes to about ten pages but since I am still ambivalent in my assessment of this bizarre episode in Oswald's history I merely filed it away somewhere, without trying to get it published.

(Another paper, extending the discussion of Charles Givens in Accessories in the light of new CD's which provide additional evidence of the perjury and collusion I had postulated, will probably be published in July in The Texas Observer. FBI agents were involved in the Givens matter, too, in a way that is hardly to their credit. I will be sure to send you the article if and when it is published --together with the singularly feeble and unresponsive "reply" of the WC lawyer who was directly responsible, and, hopefully, some editorial conclusions about the respective merits of the article and the reply.)

Page 5, paragraph 2: This paragraph, and the whole of Section C, in fact, reflect a position that is legitimate but that seems to imply acceptance on the part of the author or authors of the thesis that Oswald did have a capacity for violence, was a danger to the President, and was the subject of FBI negligence. It also implies that Oswald in fact did order and did receive the rifle and the revolver identified as the JFK/Tippit murder weapons. As I said, that is a legitimate basis for discussion and/or criticism of the FBI handling of the case before 11/22/63. Personally, however, since I believe Oswald to have been entirely innocent of any part in or prior knowledge of the assassination, I am inclined to agree with the Hoover testimony that there was no indication that Oswald was a dangerous character or a threat to the safety of JFK. What I disagree with is the later FBI about-face on his capacity for and resort to violence and murder, in the face of much contrary and/or suspect "evidence". This is merely my own point of view, for your information, and not a suggestion for change of this part of the memorandum, which, as I interpret it, weighs the performance of the FBI on the basis of its own criteria and standard practices.

The mail-cover issue is of cardinal importance. An honest Commission, with such fulsome evidence that a mail cover on Oswald had been in operation during the crucial period when he supposedly ordered and received a rifle and a revolver, would have pressed very hard for contemporaneous FBI records covering those alleged transactions. The determined and fastidious avoidance of the whole issue on the part of the WC seems to me to be one of the major derelictions of its work and to betray its dishonesty of purpose.

These are my comments on the memorandum, and I hasten to say that they are off-the-cuff and somewhat hasty. I have not yet read the Mardian speech or the opinion in the Ray suit but will do so the moment I have a breather and hopefully before I leave the city next week. If I have any material comments to add, I will write again. Meanwhile, my thanks for sharing these items with me, and my cordial regards to you and your Committee colleagues. I hope we can meet personally one day.

Sincerely,