

Saturday, 19 August 1978

Dear Larry,

I have spent much of today re-reading your letter of the 14th and thinking hard about your signal discovery of the E. 10th Street waitress and about the jacket. I do congratulate you on your discovery, and I am only sorry that I find myself unable to come up with any particularly useful ideas.

About the E. 10th Street waitress: One of the hypotheses which I and others considered long ago, in the early days of the case, and arising from suggestions (the source of which are now completely obscured) that Tippit was something of a philanderer, was that his murder was wholly unrelated to the JFK assassination and derived, instead, from some affair he was having with a woman. The circumstances of his encounter with the man who shot him suggested the possibility that the two men knew each other, and we postulated (1) a jealous husband (2) a jealous spurned boyfriend of the woman with whom Tippit was involved, or (3) neither of the preceding but an associate or a confederate involved with Tippit in some narcotics or other criminal enterprise. Your discovery of the waitress creates some foundation for (1) or (2) above. The question is, how can you proceed to uncover further information?

The obvious next step would be to locate the E. 10th waitress. Is there a union through which you could trace her? Foodhandlers such as cooks and waiters are sometimes registered with the health department, which investigates outbreaks of typhoid fever, looking for foodhandlers who may be typhoid carriers. Perhaps you could inquire at the Dallas health department for any record of this waitress. If and when you do locate her, there will be the enormous problem of getting her to talk about her relationship with Tippit, her whereabouts at the crucial time, did she rendezvous with Tippit before he was shot or did they have an appointment to meet? Did he have the key to her E. 10th Street apartment (e.g., could he have gone there even in her absence for a nap, a drink, or the like)? Was her separated husband aware of her relationship with Tippit? Or a jealous ex-boy-friend? If so, was this man in Dallas? Did he and Tippit know each other?

The difficulties are overwhelming. The other approach would be to locate collateral witnesses, such as the couple who managed the apartment building, neighbors, friends of the waitress who were privy to her affairs, and so forth. Any of these efforts and approaches seem to me to be beyond the resources of any private individual. It would seem to need a professional team to locate the persons in question, and a body with subpoena power to compel their testimony. On the other hand, you have already done spectacular work in discovering the existence of the waitress, and perhaps further efforts on your part will bear fruit. As I told you on the phone, my forte is documentary analysis rather than field investigation. Someone like Mary Ferrell is far more resourceful than I in tracing and interviewing witnesses. She would probably get a job at Austin's and get the other waitress and Austin himself to confide in her!

So, as you see, I have not had any brainstorm about the waitress; and the same is true for the jacket. I think that your theory of a switch of jackets has merit. One can consider the possibility of a Tippit murder wholly unrelated to the assassination, while nearby Oswald was being tracked by police preparing to seize him (or execute him?) for the JFK assassination. How could they create an immediate apparent link between the two murders? How many people would be involved in manufacturing the apparent link?

I have always been bothered by the failure of the Dallas police to produce a complete list of the persons present in the theater when LHO was arrested and by the fact that the Warren Commission took testimony from so few of them, and asked them few searching questions. LHO seems to have left his rooming house wearing a zipper jacket and if (as I believe) he went directly to the movie house he should have had that jacket with him. Could any of the people at the movie have seen that jacket?

There were numerous indications that the jacket worn by Tippit's killer and/or found near the scene was white and did not correspond to Oswald's gray jacket. That would support the theory of a switch. But we would still come up against the very, very difficult question of how the police could almost instantaneously convert an unrelated Tippit murder into an LHO murder. Remember, a police officer said in the hearing of Julia Postal that he thought they had LHO in both murders--the policeman and the President. That came so quickly that it suggests a murder of Tippit premeditated to tie in to the assassination.

These are random and unhelpful thoughts. I will continue to ponder these matters and if I have any new ideas I will be in touch.

Very best regards,