

17 July 1967

Dear Shirley,

Regarding Barnes: I had marked up his mysterious comments about the "Stop" sign (7H 273) on my first reading of the volumes of testimony, but I still don't understand why he thought the sign had any significance in relation to the Tippit shooting. Of course, I did not know until getting your letter of 7/8/67 that Mrs. Clemons reported a damaged car or a tow truck. Now, that IS puzzling! None of the other witnesses at the Tippit scene mentioned any accident, and the Barnes photo of the stop sign is not included in his Exhibits. The only photo that does show the sign is CE 524, which is a simulated photo in which the sign appears undamaged (but it may be a new replacement).*

To the best of my knowledge, there is nothing in the verbatim transcript of the police radio log (CE 1974), either Channel 1 or Channel 2, suggesting that there had been a traffic accident at the Tippit scene or near it. Yet officer W.D. Mentzel says that he was in his assigned position in central Oak Cliff (districts 91 and 92) and that at about 1 p.m. he was dispatched to the 800 block of West Davis on an accident call. Why isn't this in the transcript? Mentzel, who is responsible for the district in which Tippit was shot (no. 91) stayed at the 800 block of West Davis for 10 minutes and was travelling west on Davis toward Tyler when he heard the call on a shooting in the 400 block of East 10th, and proceeded to 10th and Jefferson to look for an individual reportedly running away from the scene.

Why was this accident report on West Davis left out of the so-called verbatim transcript? And how does it tie in with the stop sign and/or a traffic accident at 10th and Patton?

*You say that the Commission did show us pictures of the accident or rather of the damage it inflicted on the stop sign; but I don't find such a picture. Can you clarify?

I continue to doubt that Tippit was sent to central Oak Cliff at 12:45 p.m. and I reject completely the reasons given by Jackson in his CBS interview for allegedly sending Tippit and/or Nelson out of their own districts at 12:45.

Reverting to Castorr: I will of course keep confidential the letter (which I returned to you already). I would like to hear your impression of the tape of the dear Colonel--I fear that he has taken Harold in completely; and I share your worry about Harold's cooperation with LIFE. I have a lot of respect and affection for Harold, basically; yet I find it hard to deal with him, and his unceasing barrage of angry letters to various news media (copies arrive almost daily) fill me with dismay and weariness. I cannot get through to Harold (I did try once) to convey the effect he has on people--he makes it all too easy for them to laugh at him and brush him off as a pananoic. And he seems taken in also by Garrison. Did you catch Garrison's "rebuttal" on NBC the other night? I was appalled by his posing as an expert on the WR and the 26 volumes, and by the irrelevance and sophomoric quality of much of his presentation, as well as by his errors on points of evidence and his obvious lack of secure grasp.

You are right, Shirley--it is inevitable that we will get on each other's nerves from time to time (I don't mean you personally); we are all tired out, irritable, frustrated, and there is a very serious estrangement between the pro-Garrison critics and the anti's. We must all do everything we can to prevent friction and to heal wounds. Wish I could continue at greater length, but I have chores that can't wait. Much love. Sylvia