

Clippings:

- *** 1. 27 Sep 79 Congr. Record [1 p.] Remarks by Stokes, introducing the Blakey-Belin and Blakey-S. Specter exchanges (previously listed). Stokes is unhappy that uninformed criticism is coming from people associated with the WC; he notes that the HSCA "did not reach a harsh judgment on the work of the Commission." (AR 257-8 cited.) That's for sure! And Belin wasn't even grateful!
- *** 2. 28 Sep 79 National Review [4 pp.] Blakey's reply to Belin's 4/27 piece [see 4/28 list, #3] and Belin's rebuttal.
- *** 3. 5 Oct 79 [3 pp.] Blakey letter to National Review, responding to Belin's rebuttal. Deals with Bowers, Holland, Silverman, McLain, etc. Strong language - "the unwisdom of congressmen [i.e., Edgar] relying on shoddy workmanship by outsiders who have an ax to grind [Belin & Specter]...."
- *** 4. 16 Nov 79 Congr. Record [1 p.] (P. H10974) Stokes notes the murder of John Paul Spica, and finds it "difficult to fathom" why the Justice Department has not yet reached a decision on pursuing the MLK case.
- *** 5. 22 Nov 79 DMN (in TCI 12/22) [2 pp.] Earl Golz, "Public once again in dark." Re nonavailability of HSC files. Quotes Blakey, Stokes, Kinas, HW, PLH, etc.
- *** 6. 23 Nov 79 UPI in Wash. Star [1 p.] "Lawyer for Assassinations Panel (GRB) Criticizes Justice for Failure to Act" (Based on phone interview with WLIR.)
7. 27 Nov 79 DMN (in TCI 12/22) [1 p.] "Dallas County weighs plans for JFK assassination exhibit," by Scott Parks. Exhibits to reflect only the findings of official investigations.
8. Dec 1979 Wash. Monthly [3 pp.] "[Teddy] Kennedy's Woman Problem; Women's Kennedy Problem," by Suzannah Lessard. What do Mark Lane and EMK have in common?
9. 21 Dec 79 AP in SFC [1 p.] Black Caucus urges Presidential candidates to take a stand on MLK! Well, sort of - among the caucus' guidelines: "Vigorous support of a national holiday to honor" King.
- *** 10. 22 Dec 79 The Nation [7 pp.] "The Assassination Circus: Conspiracies Unlimited," by Frank Donner (director of the ACLU's research project on political surveillance). Bad. Really and truly horrible. The David Belin of the Left. So bad that I can't muster the energy for a letter of rebuttal. Discouraging - this is Victor Navasky's Nation!
Donner offhandedly dismisses the "highly dubious acoustical evidence;" a knoll gunman is unlikely because it is hard to believe that a conspiracy would have used two gunmen "while altogether neglecting to organize an escape plan." I really can't tell whether the absence of an escape plan is deduced from the fact that no knoll gunman was caught, or from the fact that Oswald was arrested far from the scene of the crime.
More? Oswald was psychotic, Ruby was unstable. Most of this is not an analysis of the HSC material; it looks like a literature review. Donner gets to dump on Oglesby, Mailer, Lane, Anson, Epstein, Eddowes, et al. "Is it not time to abandon the escapism, media hustle and radical chic of political conspiraphilia and face the desperate challenge of organizing a left movement in this country? ... We cannot permit the political meaning of what has been done to us by real conspirators to be lost in the cries of 'Wolf!' by those for whom the truth is never bad enough." Bleagh.
- * 11. 22 Dec 79 The Nation [2 pp.] An exchange of letters on wiretapping, by Blakey and Herman Schwartz (Response to Schwartz' article, 11/29 list, #60)
- *** 12. Jan 1980 Harper's [19 pp.] "The McCord File," by Jim Hougan. Makes a pretty strong case that McCord was a double agent; places Lou Russell on the scene. Fensterwald gets a long footnote. Hougan doesn't get into McCord's motives or loyalties, which is presumably the really hot stuff.

Indexes: Gary Owens has sent me 4 pages of errata to the Meagher-Owens HSCA indexes, which I'll send to anyone who asks for them.

HSC Files: As indicated in my 9/8 newsletter, Rep. Preyer indicated to me that "all the records and recommendations" of the HSC had been turned over to the Justice Department. I am reliably informed that this is not correct. Justice got the physical evidence - such as the DPD tape - but none of the unpublished testimony, etc. The files are physically at the Archives, as Congressional files.

FBI Files: I've spent a few hours looking at the microfilm collection. My first impression is that there really is a lot of junk, and that the initial review (mostly by AIB people) did pick out a very good percentage of the goodies. I'll be looking at these files for a while, with rather low priority.

Varona: The Cuban exile leader who played a major role in the CIA-Mafia plots against Castro has been identified by Dan Moldea (and maybe others) as Antonio de Varona, one of the founders of the CRC. The HSCA has confirmed this identification, presumably by inadvertence. (Compare 10 AH 57 at note 2 and 10 AH 171 at note 181.)

The HSCA has presumably given us new information about Varona. For example, the fact that he spoke at a CRC meeting in New Orleans on November 15, 1963 and stayed at the home of Sylvia Odio's uncle (Augustin Guitart) was news to me. [10 AH 62] A chronology of all the known activities of this Cuban exile leader might be useful. Has anyone done it? Would anyone like to? I'll accept and/or pass on cites to sources which anyone sends me.

Whether or not one can make links to Oswald and Dallas, the fact that the CIA and the Mafia were using someone as publicly prominent as Varona strikes me as worthy of contemplation. Any ideas?

This Newsletter: I'm going to keep this going for a while - less than weekly, in most cases. If anyone wants to send me a couple of dollars for postage and copying (at 4¢/page), that's fine, but not necessary. I for one will miss the AIB newsletter! I'm not trying to replace it, but just to make my own correspondence more efficient.

If everyone out there thinks the case is irretrievably dead now, let me know!

A few specific comments on the Donner article:

The guy clearly doesn't know the case. Clearly.

He's too smart to try to defend the WC to the end. But to say that "the bias of the WC was reflected in its failure to exhaust investigative leads and thereby prove that no conspiracy existed" makes little sense. Would even the most anti-WC among us be able to prove that the WC "did consciously withhold its investigative resources from areas that might compromise the powers that be"? What does he mean?

Shameless: a little conspiracy would "lack ... the political resonance of a true assassination conspiracy."

Where does he get this stuff about Ray giving Nazi salutes in public, etc.?

Was Booth really a "deranged loser," a "psychopathic gunman"?

An early examination of LHO is said to have shown "distinct psychotic symptoms." ??

What is the source for LHO saying "everybody will know who I am know"? My recollection is that it was either Craig or McDonald, neither at all reliable.

Where was this "unusually receptive media support network" when I needed it?

I can't tell if the reference to Tink Thompson's "desertion of the classroom" (p. 657) is supposed to be sympathetic.

The list of critics' groups (p. 658), including the widely-unknown CIPA, almost certainly is from The Assassinations, p. 528.

Nobody will catch me defending Epstein, but Donner seems to be dismissing the whole question of Nosenko's good faith.

I gather that to Donner, a real conspiracy is one which taps his phone, not one which kills his President.

This stuff really does make me appreciate Jacob Cohen!

