

14 December 1969

Dear Mr. Masterman,

Probably you have not heard from Bobbs-Merrill because of the tragic death of my friend and editor, Robert Ockene, who has succumbed to leukemia at the age of 35. I do not know what arrangements will be made to handle his work. However, I do know that copies of Accessories are still available and that Bobbs-Merrill will fill any order from a bookdealer or an individual who wants to purchase a copy.

To try to answer your questions as best I can: My articles in the Minority of One included two excerpts from Accessories, and of several book reviews (Manchester, Epstein, etc.), an article on the stillborn "Texas court of inquiry," and articles on the assassinations of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy.

As to the timing of the first shot or shots: I am always heartened to learn that new and younger researchers are at work on the Warren Report evidence, since we "first generation" critics can only benefit by fresh insights and energy which hopefully will extend and supplement our own findings. The last thing I would wish to do would be to discourage such inquiry.

I am making these remarks by way of preface, in the hope that you will not misunderstand my comments on the direction of your own work. I was frankly very surprised that you are proceeding on the completely inadequate basis of the Warren Report—proper and covering ground that has been under scrutiny since late 1964 and treated rather fully in the literature, published and unpublished, on the basis of not only the 26 volumes of testimony and documents but also unpublished Commission documents (CDs) from the Archives. Moreover, it is not clear to me whether you have read and taken into account the rather extensive discussion of all aspects of the timing, number, and direction of the shots—including the testimony of Jarman, Norman, and Williams—in the critical literature. Many questions have been raised about what they actually said, at different times to different investigators, and what in fact they did hear on 11/22/63 as opposed to what they heard during the reenactment. I do not recall off-hand where the last point was discussed but I distinctly do remember reading in one of the many books or articles exactly the same suggestion you make, of superimposed perceptions experienced during the reenactment.

To be very specific, it is clear from the transcripts of testimony that the three men did not give identical versions of the number and direction of shots, and that only Norman of the three claimed to have heard the bullets strike over his head on the sixth floor. In short, it seems to me that you are covering in 1969 the ground that was explored by the critics in 1964-1966, and doing it without the indispensable source material and without familiarity with all the relevant findings in the literature. It seems to me highly unlikely that anything can result from such a handcuffed or blindfolded approach. I say this without intending any offense and I hope that you will take it in the same spirit. My suggestion is that you obtain and study the 26 volumes and the numerous serious works of criticism (there are several useful bibliographies available), and as many of the unpublished CDs as possible from the National Archives; and when you have mastered and integrated all of that material, you will then be able to decide what can still be usefully done that has not already been done or done adequately.

If I have been outspoken, it was with the hope of impressing on you the need for systematic, comprehensive information as the basis for meaningful research. The timing of the shot that struck Connally is a case in point. The original work was done by Raymond Marcus, who after very painstaking study and measurement of frames from the Zapruder film produced a persuasive hypothesis of a hit at about frame 238. J. D. Thompson then carried that hypothesis into virtual proof by quantifying, elaborating and supplementing the Marcus findings. If you have already read The Bastard Bullet

by Marcus and Six Seconds in Dallas by Thompson, you will perhaps agree with my summary.

Having said all this, I do wish you all good luck in pursuing your inquiries on this case and I hope that I have in no way dampened your enthusiasm.

Yours sincerely,