

*Marano*

9 June 1979

Dear Ray,

I still have for you and Letha the gift that you were not permitted to carry off the ship two years ago...it is too fragile to entrust to the mails...so I can only hope that sooner or later you will come to New York and I can give it to you.

Strange days for us. Blakey and David Belin are having a snarling fight on the pages of the Washington Star, about the merits of the findings of the HSCA and about its methodology. A writer for The New Republic, Kenneth Bede, gave a commentary on public TV a few nights ago...saying that the contents of the HSCA Report are leaking all over Washington...that there had been indeed a conspiracy...that the critics had been right all along...and that the investigation must be pressed forward, it was still possible to get to the bottom of the mystery...and that if that did not happen it would show that the American people really did not care who had killed their President. I have written to Bede asking if he could send me a transcript of his remarks.

This morning I heard a delicious piece of news from my niece Susan. She belongs to some Brandeis University women's group and gets their newsletter. In the current issue, she tells me, there is an article by Jacob Cohen, in which Cohen capitulates to the conspiracy side and admits that he has been wrong all along. He is persuaded by the acoustical tape and particularly by the very short intervals between the shots. However, his book ("Conspiracy Fever") is still coming out, with his old views and his old arguments, and he is embarrassed about that.

The publication of the HSCA Report has been delayed repeatedly and now it seems that it will not be out until August. It appears to me that they are finding it difficult to reconcile the whole body of their work, arguing for the lone assassin and the single bullet, with the last-minute acoustical findings. I am curious to see if they will concede two riflemen only or go the whole hog and admit that the 1.65 second interval between the first two shots (from behind the car) prove that there were two assassins behind the car and one on the knoll. If Blakey persists in arguing that the Carcano could be fired in 1.6 seconds using the dry sights, he will make himself a laughing-stock.

It is ironic that all the evidence of shots from the grassy knoll cited by the critics--the eyewitnesses, the photographs, the puff of smoke, the fake Secret Service agent--have suddenly been given legitimacy by Blakey. That evidence was no less strong before the acoustical findings but was ignored by the HSCA as by the Warren Commission before it. What enrages me is that the evidence of conspiracy was overwhelming before the acoustical tape but was disregarded, as much of that evidence--including Oswald's alibi--is still wholly disregarded. I am intrigued by another point: the location of the entry wound in the head, which Humes has finally conceded is four inches higher than he and his cohorts said. I could believe that Humes et al were blind, stupid, careless, whatever, until I saw the rendition by the medical artist of a photograph of the head. In this autopsy photograph, taken at the direction of Humes, the hair has been pulled away to expose a circular entry wound at the top of the head, and a ruler has been placed alongside of that wound. How, having had such a photograph made, could Humes possibly have believed that the wound was four inches lower????? The question therefore remains--are these autopsy photographs authentic???? This is, to my mind, a crucial new question for exploration.

For some time I theorized that Blakey had set up the acoustical evidence only in order to knock it over and revert to the single-bullet, lone-assassin. I do not think so any longer. He is defending the conspiracy finding very vehemently and publicly voiced his opinion that "the mob did it". That will also be difficult to defend so long as Blakey also insists that Oswald was one of the assassins. Did the mob recruit Oswald? Was he such a terrific marksman that the mob preferred him to their usual hit men? Can't you just see Marcelle and Tafficante sitting around, deciding to rub out the President, and sending out a call for Lee Oswald to do it? Blakey will be a highing-steek if that is his hypothesis.

I am not on speaking terms with David Lifton but I am told that his book is on its way and will come out presumably when he has been able to add a critique of the HSCA Report. Other critics, mainly of the second generation, are rushing to publish books and anthologies on the Report after it comes out. Personally, I am just sitting back and watching events unroll.

I would love to hear from you, Ray. My love to you and Letha and the children.

As ever,