

22 November 1965

Dear David,

Thank you very much for your generous remarks about the Randi broadcast. I've often wondered how you are and whether you remained interested in the assassination. I do keep in touch with a few of the group from the New School and I hope that you will find time too to drop over and talk.

I did receive the notice about the Socialist Scholars Conference symposium and ordinarily I would have liked very much to hear Conor Cruise O'Brien. I admired his book on the Congo, a subject on which I worked for some years. However, the last six months or more have been so busy that no time was available even for the ballet, which I used to attend religiously.

I have been working on a book, as you know, and have written about 250 pages; however, I interrupted that project to compile a subject index to the Warren Report and the Hearings & Exhibits, and a supplement to the name index which appears in Volume XV, which will be published early next year by Scarecrow Press. I also went to the Archives to see the Zapruder color slides; and just the business of keeping in touch and exchanging information with other people who are working or writing on the same subject has been very time-consuming, though extremely rewarding and heartening, of course.

Your comments on my position, and Curtis Crawford's, are thoughtful and perceptive. I am not sure that I am on the right road; but it has seemed to me that the first step should be to discredit the Report, and reestablish public doubt about Oswald's guilt (or sole guilt) and hopefully set in motion pressure on various levels for a re-investigation of the whole case. To weave an alternate hypothesis, which is what many people seem to demand (on a platter, with conclusive proof) seems to me out of the question so long as there is so much uncertainty about what "facts" we can accept as solid, or reject as dubious or false; and so long as there are no answers to many, many questions that should have been asked but were not. As you say, I did not have time to reply to Crawford on the "Mauser;" nor to comment on the time of the Connally hit by a bullet or bullets. I could not fix that time at all, on the basis of the color slides, and while I was once inclined to think it was at about frame 228 or 229, my attention has since been called to the fact that some frames later—about 235 or so—Connally's right hand seems to be grasping the hand rail. That was my impression when I saw the color slides, and the projectionist agreed. One would have to at least question whether that hand action would have been possible if the wrist was already shattered by a bullet. If expert medical opinion said "no" then the conclusion that the two men were hit by the same bullet, with the more seriously wounded man having a delayed reaction, would be impossible to sustain—even if the other contraindications were eliminated.

As for the "Mauser," my point was not that there was, or was not, a substitution (or a second rifle)—but only that the distorted partial presentation of the available evidence, particularly the omission of two written descriptions made on Friday by Lt Day and by Dhority, and of the FBI interview with Weitzman, leaves me unable to dismiss the matter as misunderstanding and confusion. If one knew the source of Wade's impression that it was a Mauser (and I see no indication of contact between him and Weitzman or Boone); if one saw the missing reports; it might be possible to reach a firm conclusion. As things are, I cannot place the necessary faith in the Dallas Police or in the Commission.

I should say a word also about Captain Fritz as a possible co-conspirator--again a point that I didn't have an opportunity to raise (or perhaps I didn't think of it until it was too late). Of course his delay in ending the interrogation opens him to suspicion; however, it is not clear whether he was deliberately delaying or waiting for the arrival of the armored truck, which did not reach the building until 11.07, and then Fritz urged a decoy plan, which I suppose required some further discussion or reorganization. It was really not fair to discuss the delay without mentioning the armored truck and decoy plan; but I agree with you that Crawford's analysis, on his own terms, does not eliminate Fritz from suspicion.

It has never seemed plausible to me that the Dallas Police really had no prior knowledge of Oswald. My "faith" in the FBI makes me feel that they notified the local authorities automatically of any leftist under their own watchful eye. In any case, one imagines that the Fort Worth and Dallas Police do read the papers, and would have known of Oswald's defection to the USSR and perhaps of his return as well, if that got any press coverage, which at the moment I don't recall. If they had such prior knowledge (as they did of Molina, whose activities were very tame), it would explain much that is now rather incomprehensible.

But the Warren Commission did not ask the FBI (Hosty or Shanklin or others) what the established procedures were, although Revill did volunteer that relations with the local FBI had always been very good, so again the basis for a firm conclusion is lacking.

You say that we have to decide who did it. For all I know, those who did have not even been mentioned by name anywhere in the Report or the H & E. I cannot decide who did it on the basis of what we now know; but it does seem to me ~~very~~ indisputable that the Report does not make an adequate case against Oswald, and has failed to demonstrate that he had motive, means, or opportunity--at least failed to do so to the satisfaction of such people as Leo Sauvage (he has an article on the Commission in the 11/22/65 New Leader), Salandria, Fox, Fred Cook, etc. Not only did they fail in that, but they issued a work which at the very least is shockingly careless and biased. It is all well and good to say that the real work was done by the bright young lawyers, not the seven wise elders--that does not make the results higher in quality. In any case, the seven signed the Report, and thus assumed official and moral responsibility for it.

I have succumbed to the temptation to ramble too long and to berate what I hope is a dead horse--an exercise which I am told becomes boring to the listener--so let me thank you again, Dave, for your welcome letter. Please give me a call one evening, Chelsea 2-4293, I would like to see you again and perhaps when some of the others in the course get together, as we sometimes do, you will be able to join us.

Sincerely,

Sylvia Meagher