

# POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE of BROOKLYN

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DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

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Dear Sylvia,

I thought you were tremendous on the Randi all night show the other night. Generally Randi manages to ruin any panel, no matter how good it is. But this time he didn't, even with the aid of that absurd lawyer. Lobenthal & Fox didn't hurt, but the real ~~XXXXXX~~ conflict is between you and Crawford.

I frankly accept what I take to be his overall view, that the incompetency, deliberate distortions, and lies, etc. of the Warren Report cannot by itself negate the hypothesis that Oswald was the lone assassin. This is basically true because it is a reasonable assumption to make that even if the Commission and ~~the~~ Johnson had no evidence that a conspiracy existed they might well act in every way to prove that Oswald was the lone assassin, even to the extent of manufacturing evidence, on the grounds that to do otherwise might reveal a conspiracy--and this of course would shake the country by its roots.

On the other hand, you show that the Commission's Report is of no value. What the two of you are doing, methodologically, are different ~~and in conflict~~ but not in conflict. He should agree with you on the value of the Report. He then goes to the Hearings to find out if Oswald did it alone and you argue that the Hearings themselves are too distorted to do the type of deduction that Crawford does. That may be, but since there never will be, it would appear, another Commission we have to decide when all is said and done, who did it. (This doesn't mean of course that the tactic of just destroying the sanctity of the Report as you and Lane are doing is incorrect. As I say, your job and Crawford's are complementary.)


Having said this, I have the feeling that I and you, doing what Crawford is doing, would pretty decidedly come down against the Oswald alone bit. Crawford's own analysis of whether Fritz was a conspirator made me lean more to a yes answer than a no. His independent evidence on Connally being hit by the same bullet as JFK depended on his prejudiced eyesight as to which frame Connally was hit in, and I remain skeptical. However, he did sort of best you on the Mauser. You didn't get a chance to answer,

Would the ~~fact~~ theory that the rifle originally found was a Mauser be true only by implicating an impossibly large number of conspirators?

To change the subject. I put your name on the Socialist Scholars Conference mailing list, not because I have any reason to believe that you are particularly interested in socialist scholarship, or are even a socialist, but I thought you might be interested in Conor Cruise O'Brien's address. Since I don't think you came--(I was registration procedures chairman)--I thought I'd mention that the address will be reprinted in a forthcoming Studies on the Left. O'Brien also wrote a wonderful article on the Congo in a recent issue of New Left Review.

Perhaps we can get together sometimes. Again, you were wonderful on the program.

Sincerely



David Mermelstein