

23 March 1971

Mr John P Conlon
52 Columbia Street
Newark, Ohio 43055

Dear Mr Conlon,

Thank you for your amusing and interesting letter of the 13th. Since you have been looking at my book, I will mention that the one disagreement which marred an otherwise pleasant relationship with my publishers was on their insistence on placing a Mark Lane comment on the dust-jacket. Lane is a cross that has had to be borne by serious and honest critics of the Warren Report, together with such preposterous mischief-makers as Garrison and his coterie.

I no longer have the Analog in which your letter appeared (I would welcome a copy, if you have one) and I can only hope that you do not consider that I quoted you out of context. Apparently you feel now, and perhaps felt in 1964, that the Mannlicher-Carcano rifle in question could have performed in the manner attributed to that weapon by the Warren Commission. Since at the time of the assassination I was not able to differentiate between a shotgun and a rifle, I cannot take issue with rifle experts. In the years since my book was published, I have had the opportunity to consult with one professional weapons and ballistics expert (Shelley Braverman, whose name is perhaps familiar to you) and at least two "amateur" weapons experts. As a result, I became more convinced than ever that the official reasoning and conclusions on the MC rifle discovered in the Book Depository were specious. You are quite right to say that anything (singular) is possible. What is involved here is a long chain of high-improbability factors, the aggregate and collective improbability of which amount to virtual impossibility (if you include, in addition to the MC as such, the marksmanship, the stretcher bullet, and the wounds inflicted).

In my book, as in most of the other books on the subject, I addressed myself to two different but perhaps inseparable sets of problems---first and foremost, the scope and the quality of the official investigation performed by the Commission and its co-opted investigative agencies, and the honesty, accuracy, and impartiality with which the facts were presented in the Warren Report. Second, what in fact really happened at Dealey Plaza on 11/22/63. Thus, when I discussed the rifle sling I was pointing to the alertness and diligence, or lack thereof, of the investigators, and not necessarily relating the sling to the mechanics of the shooting as such. Time does not permit me to comment on each of the points you raised but perhaps I will do so at a later opportunity, when there is more leisure.

For the moment, I will only add that during the last three years or so I have obtained a huge mass of unpublished Commission documents from the National Archives, and new information of decisive importance from other sources, both governmental and unofficial, which provided strong corroboration of certain hypotheses on specific points, discussed in Accessories (among which,

conclusive evidence that the two photographs of Oswald holding the MC rifle are composites and fabrications--confirmation of perjury and collusion involving Charles Givens and Oswald's whereabouts shortly before the shooting--corroboration of the spurious nature of the 1:35 a.m. arraignment of Oswald for the murder of the President--and still more evidence not alone of the incompetence of the autopsy but of its outright, purposeful deceptiveness).

This has served to reinforce my conviction that my general assessment of the Warren Report and of the role of Oswald, which of course derive from the totality of information and evidence and not from the rifle alone, is sound in terms of fact and logic. I do not expect to gain converts to my viewpoint in a letter, when the book setting forth my reasoning did not persuade. But I do hope that you will continue to examine the literature on the subject, among which I especially recommend The Oswald Affair by Leo Sauvage and Six Seconds in Dallas by J. D. Thompson.

Thank you again for your painstaking and interesting letter. With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

Sylvia Meagher
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