

6 February 1968

Professor Robert M. Slusser  
Department of History  
The Johns Hopkins University  
Baltimore, Md. 21218

Dear Professor Slusser,

I am, of course, gratified by your kind remarks about my work on the subject of the assassination and pleased by much of your review of my book Accessories After The Fact in the Baltimore Sun of 4 February 1968. But you will not be surprised if I contest a point or two—nor, I hope, offended.

First and foremost, I disagree with your surprising attribution to the Warren Commission of "candor and courage" in publishing the Hearings and Exhibits. You may recall from Epstein's Inquest (page 24) that Chairman Warren decided in May 1964 that the volumes of testimony and exhibits would not be published, ostensibly because of the expense. It was only after protests by the lawyers and intervention by the Congressional members of the Commission that the decision was made to publish the 26 volumes.

True, those 26 volumes have constituted the principal source for my denunciation of the Commission and its Report; but, as Leo Sauvage points out in his introduction to my book, the Commission denies that the evidence and testimony run counter to its main conclusions and can scarcely receive credit for publishing what it pretends does not exist—evidence which discredits its method of work and its central "findings." That such evidence has indeed "been provided unwittingly," as Sauvage inferred, is implicit in the contents of the exhibits, and has been corroborated in my contacts with Commission lawyers. (See, for example, footnote on page xxv; see also excerpt from CE 2560, quoted on page 106, about the publication of which the responsible Commission lawyer was unaware, as emerged in telephone conversation.)

Moreover, even today—more than three years after publication of the Warren Report—evidentiary material of cardinal importance remains classified and inaccessible to responsible scholars: the spectrographic findings, the autopsy photographs and X rays, and many investigative reports.

This history of suppression and attempted suppression of the material evidence, plus the failure of the Commission members to confront very serious criticisms and questions which have been raised about its work, plus the documented record of misrepresentation, distortion, and omission of evidence in the Warren Report and/or the Hearings and Exhibits—these scarcely seem to warrant any tributes to the Commission's "candor and courage."

Your review also refers to my "principle that the Warren Commission must be wrong on every point." That is rather an inexact statement of my position. In my view, the Commission has been proven wrong--and in some instances, deliberately deceitful--on so many crucial points of fact and evidence that its entire Report must be regarded as suspect on points not susceptible of independent and objective verification.


You complain further that I have ignored a significant body of evidence concerning Oswald's emotional compulsions, frustrations, and the like. This is the very body of "evidence" that has been purveyed to the public in the mass circulation magazines and other mass media in a glib and unceasing stream since November 1963, to encourage the impression of a lunatic lone assassin. But I consider that the evidence provides Oswald with an alibi and that his emotional and psychological state, and his alleged capacity for violence, are irrelevant when the hard evidence suggests his innocence. Indeed, you seem to concede my point when you say, in your review of Robert Oswald's book, that it will survive as little more than a psychological curiosity if it is ultimately shown that Oswald was innocent.

In a similar vein, the questions I have raised about the inconsistency and illogic of the behavior attributed to Oswald by the Warren Commission are entirely legitimate so long as the case against him consists largely of contrived and flimsy evidence. If the hard evidence was overwhelming, such questions would scarcely be material to the issue of guilt; but as things stand, they are legitimate and necessary considerations.

A final clarification: I do not rule out the possibility that Oswald was implicated in the conspiracy to assassinate the President. If and when there is proof or solid evidence that incriminates him, I will accept it. Until such time, however, it is Oswald and not the Commission who is entitled to the benefit of doubt.

Incidentally, Weisberg is not the only critic who is working with Garrison. Mark Lane is Garrison's critic-in-residence; and such critics as Vincent Salandria and Ray Marcus have appeared before the New Orleans grand jury in support of Garrison's position. Did you notice, by the way, that in Garrison's foreword to Weisberg's book there is not one mention of Weisberg or of his book?

Yours very sincerely,

  
Sylvia Meagher  
302 West 12 Street  
New York, N.Y. 10014