

16 September 1971

Dear Fred,

As promised, I have considered carefully the question you raised about Truly's exact whereabouts before the motorcade arrived and at 12:30 when he joined up with Baker. I will play devil's advocate on this. Upon re-reading the testimony and exhibits, I find a pretty clear picture deriving from a variety of witnesses, of Truly and O.V. Campbell standing around in the general area outside the front door of the TSBD, shifting location once or twice but not moving very far, and of Truly--despite Baker's description of where Truly approached and joined him--being outside the building or at the entrance and coming inside together with Baker.

That is the general impression that emerged when I reviewed the 26 volumes, in particular the following: CSs 1381 pages 14 and 93; 1435; 2003 page 227 of the volume; and 3035; 3H 189 Norman; 202 Jamman; 219-220 Truly; 273 Reid; 6H 329 Shelley; 339 Levelady; 362 West; 371 Molina; 385 Piper.

But I do agree with you that some advance arrangements had to be made to keep Oswald inside the building and out of sight of eyewitnesses and cameras at the crucial segment of time. Truly, or anyone else to whom Oswald was subordinate (Shelley, for example) could have asked him to remain inside on some pretext, without necessarily staying inside himself to make sure that Oswald did not stray. Another possibility that I have leaned toward from an early stage is that Oswald was staying near the public telephone (near the domino room, I think) because he had been told to expect a phonecall at about 12:30. And there are still other possibilities, no doubt; but clearly some precautions had to be taken to ensure that Oswald was not in the doorway to be visible later in, say, the Altgens photo.

(LATER)

Even if the references I gave above do not refer to statements on 11/22/63 corroborating Truly's whereabouts, there are still too many individuals involved each (presumably) giving information without knowing what the others said on the same point to suggest some kind of purposeful fudging. Anyhow, on 11/22/63 the information obtained from eyewitnesses centered on their own location and observations, not on which persons from the TSBD were standing near them.

When we come to Dougherty, the evaluation of his statements is necessarily colored somewhat by the impression that he seemed to be a case of arrested development or near mental-retardation. Still, what is fascinating in the excerpt from your tape is Dougherty's statement that Oswald was having lunch on the second floor; and of course the suggestion that he saw a gun and shells before they were officially "discovered" (though I do not know what he means by "skids"). But that alleged observation is somewhat compromised by Dougherty's inability to remember whether or not he reported seeing the rifle. After all, if one remembers seeing a gun, one should also remember what one did about it. For these reasons, I feel some reservations about accepting his statements as literally accurate.

I suspect that I have been disappointingly negative about the provocative points you made in your 9/9/71 letter--but they are provocative and worth further thought and study. Now that I have read the collection of clippings on the incredible developments in the Sirhan case, the whole thing seems to be a blatant crude attempt to circumvent any testing of the charge that the ballistics evidence was phoney, by making the county clerk a fall-guy for the sad inability of the State to resolve the issue. After what happened this week at Attica, is there anyone left in this country who is still ready to believe official pronouncements? All the best, as ever,