

Justice delayed?

- *** 466. 7 Oct 80 [4 pp.] Letter from Robert L. Keuch (Special Counsel to the AG) to Stokes, justifying the JD's past and future timetables.
- *** 467. 28 Oct 80 [2 pp.] Letter from Blakey to Stokes, rebutting Keuch on when HSC material was given to the Justice Department.

Heavy stuff. Keuch's letter is a response to a letter from Stokes to the AG (which I do not have), evidently complaining about the JD's slow response to the HSC's recommendations. Keuch says that Blakey started promising the acoustical and summary reports in March 1979, and that he told the Department to buy a copy from the GPO in September, "almost two months after the ... release of a copy of the HSCA final report to Bantam [sic] Books." In rebuttal, Blakey notes that the January summary (containing the recommendations) and the actual dictabelt were forwarded promptly, that Keuch and other JD members were given the report when it was released in July, and that the September request was for additional sets of the report and volumes.

Keuch's tone is remarkably hostile. He manages to refer to the "Bantam" edition twice, noting that JD attorneys reviewed the report starting in September 1979, "initially the Bantam Books edition since it was available first." I had no trouble getting the GPO edition first; maybe Keuch should have asked Jeff Goldberg for a copy.

Regardless of the facts on past JD-HSC liaison, the bottom line is clear: Keuch, at least, is not joining ranks with the HSC people to get a broad new investigation going as quickly as possible. There's nothing in this letter to make anyone optimistic about a JD reopening (at least under this administration).

Keuch's letter does include a number of tidbits: FBI, CIA, and NSA were asked to help review the acoustics. CIA and NSA said they didn't have the "specialized equipment or expert personnel" to help. A likely story - I would guess they knew a no-win situation when they saw one. The NSF initially refused to perform an analysis, and a unit of the National Bureau of Standards said that a study of the acoustics evidence would be "very expensive" and unlikely to yield "information of significant value to the field of forensic science." On December 10, 1979, the FBI started a review of the HSC's Vol. 8 acoustics reports; the results were expected in "mid-October 1980." (Presumably this will be made public along with the NAS-NSF study.)

"In November 1979 the FBI was asked to conduct a series of specific ... investigative tasks," based on information from the HSC, the public, and earlier FBI investigations. (I wonder what the latter means?) Except for the acoustics and the Daniel and Bronson films, "the FBI has completed all investigative tasks requested and no new information of value has been developed." Blakey met with the JD on February 29, 1980; there has been "frequent" correspondence with him, and he has been "frequently asked" to provide all relevant information.

Keuch says that the HSC agreements with the owners of the Daniel and Bronson films won't do (due to FOIA/Privacy Act considerations, not explained), and are being renegotiated.

"One private citizen" was "granted an opportunity" to meet with JD & FBI people. Anyone we know?

Reviews of the report by the Civil Rights and Criminal Divisions have been completed. The JD's final review "should be expected within two months of the completion of the NAS report to Congress." Finally, "It would be inadvisable to attempt to formulate any final conclusions or proposals in the John F. Kennedy matter prior to the release of the NAS report, since the only indication of a conspiracy is the HSCA expert opinion regarding the acoustical evidence." (Emphasis added.)

Bleagh!

What has Blakey (or anyone else) done to Keuch, to justify all this?

Certainly the Reagan administration, with the advice of Senator Arlen Specter, is capable of taking a worse position on the reopening of the case. But they would have to work at it. I guess Keuch could be replaced by David Belin, for example.

The acoustics review panel:

- ** 468. 15 Oct 80 [1 p.] Memo from Jeff Goldberg, re info from NSF and NAS
 ** 469. 6 Oct 80 [2 pp.] Rep. Stokes' press release on grant to NAS
 *** 470. 6 Oct 80 [3 pp.] NSF press release (original and corrected versions)
 *** 471. [1 p.] Summary of the panel's mandated tasks (from the contract)

Jeff's memo reports that none of the 6 or so scientists on the panel will be named in public until the report is released, presumably to preclude calls from buffs and the press. I have learned that the chairman of the panel is Prof. Norman Ramsey of the physics department at Harvard, a well-known 65-year-old nuclear physicist. (I don't really remember, but I may have taken a course from him at one point.)

Contrary to some press reports, there will not be a public three-day workshop or seminar. It is not clear if there will be a non-public one. The plan is for the panel to work in private until their report is released.

The Stokes press release is pretty much as reported in the press. The original version of the NSF press release mentioned the three-day workshop, and also said that the NAS Committee on Ballistic Acoustics had said, inter alia, that further study was advisable of "the way the data relate to or may be technically reconciled with evidence on other events that occurred at the time of the assassination." This task does not appear in the contract summary, or in the revised press release. A reference to the workshop originally appeared in the contract summary, but was removed.

I think it is safe to assume that the acoustical evidence will not have smooth sailing through the Ramsey Panel.

Gaeton Fonzi speaks:

- *** 472. November 1980 The Washingtonian [78 pp.] "Who Killed JFK?" by Gaeton Fonzi
 This is an 80,000-word article - really a small book - with some photos. Everyone should order a copy (or two) directly from The Washingtonian, 1828 L St. NW, Suite 200, Washington DC 20036. For each copy, send \$2.25. (This includes \$0.50 for postage and handling.)

One part of this important article is the Veciana-Bishop story, told by its strongest advocate. In my first (and rather hasty) reading, I didn't see a great deal of completely new factual information in this area; there is some. The case that David Phillips is the person Veciana was talking about is indeed quite strong. That's not quite the same as saying that Phillips was Veciana's case officer, under the name of Bishop or otherwise, but I wouldn't bet any money against that. (That hypothesis remains unproven.) There remains a big jump if you want to believe that Bishop actually met with Oswald in Veciana's presence. Fonzi has not yet convinced me that he pursued alternative explanations for Veciana's story with sufficient vigor. For example, at some point during the HSC investigation it would have been appropriate to see if Veciana could identify someone who had been talking with Fonzi in his presence three months earlier. In the absence of such tests, it is hard to credit Veciana's identification of Oswald, even if he is telling the truth as he remembers it, and even if Maurice Bishop did train him to remember people. If this kind of systematic analysis of Veciana's story had been done, I would be less skeptical. This article has not basically resolved my doubts.

The other major part of Fonzi's article is an insider's look at the House Committee under Blakey. There are lots of stories, and in many cases Blakey's position is indicated well enough so that the reader doesn't just have to agree with Fonzi; in several cases, I didn't. Certainly the hypothesis that Blakey's expertise on organized crime led to biases in the investigation or in the Report deserves analysis. Those of you who have seen the chapters Russ Stetler and I wrote about the HSC's work know that we have raised such questions. Of course, just about every critic can argue persuasively that Blakey's committee neglected his pet areas; I certainly feel that way. It is difficult for me not to be skeptical of Fonzi's critique of Blakey because it is made in the context of a neglected thesis which I find ultimately unconvincing. If I had been in charge, I would have been unhappy to see Fonzi's abilities spent on chasing Maurice Bishop.

Much of Fonzi's unhappiness derives from the way Blakey treated the investigators (especially the New York detectives) who, like Fonzi, were holdovers from the Sprague staff. I don't think one can judge Blakey on this without looking in detail at the quality of the work done under Sprague's direction. I don't have an insider's view; I just know what was being said in public by Sprague and others, and what was in the interim reports. (Remember the babushka lady?) My sympathies are certainly with Blakey here. Fonzi's piece does not really deal with the quality of the pre-Blakey staff work.

By and large, what I learned from this article was how Fonzi looks at things. That is essential to an evaluation of his conclusions on Veciana-Phillips and on Sprague-Blakey. I'm reluctant to jump into a big debate, since these issues have the potential for being as divisive and difficult as the Garrison-Shaw affair. Still, I plan on writing up some notes on this article, and I would like to know what other people think.

Finally, a comment on "linkage": the article itself presents enough detail for the reader to understand the complexity and subtlety of both the Veciana-Bishop story and the Fonzi-Blakey story. Although the tone of the article is hostile enough to Blakey, Fonzi doesn't really seem to be trying to make the strongest possible charge about Blakey. However, that charge - that Blakey (or Someone who was pulling the strings) stopped Fonzi because he had the right answer - is implied in the introductory material. On the cover: "No more lies, no more cover-ups - This is the true story of my search for Who Killed JFK? A top US government investigator, fed up with bureaucratic charades, breaks his oath of silence to reveal what insiders know about the murder of John F. Kennedy. His story starts with a Cuban terrorist, the trail leads to Washington, an elusive spymaster becomes the key, but then the government stops the investigation." In the introduction: "There were two conspiracies in the Kennedy assassination: the first was to murder the President. The second was to pretend there was a full and complete investigation."

Book news:

The Blakey-Billings book has been delayed by production problems. The publication date is now expected to be January.

Parade for November 16 will include an edited excerpt from the last chapter, with an introduction by Jack Anderson. I have been urged not to judge the Blakey book by this adaptation.

Dr. John Lattimer's book is out: "Kennedy and Lincoln: Medical and Ballistic Comparisons of their Assassinations" [Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, \$19.95; xxii + 378 pages; index; many photos.] It's mostly about the Kennedy case. From a quick review of the table of contents, I got the impression that much of the book is material from Lattimer's earlier papers. It's a bit quirky; there seems to be quite a bit which is neither medical nor ballistical. His rejection of the acoustical analysis is short and sweet (and totally unconvincing); for one thing, he brings the jiggle analysis to bear against the acoustics, and I think the jiggle analysis is simply too imprecise to be used like this. Quirks and biases aside, you have to give Lattimer credit for actually going out and doing relevant experiments.

Also just out: "The Great Heroin Coup," by Danish writer Henrik Krüger. [South End Press (Boston), \$5.50 (paperback)] Translated by Jerry Meldon, edited by Jonathan Marshall, with a foreword by Peter Dale Scott. The subtitle: "Drugs, Intelligence, and International Fascism." Includes material on Hunt and Sturgis and their links, networks, nexuses, and milieux.

I am told that "The Great Cola Wars," by AIB'ers J. C. Louis and Harvey Yazijian, is now available in hardcover.

Has anyone actually seen the Wrone bibliography? Is it worth the price?

Television programs: Does anyone have a tape or transcript of "In Search of Lee Harvey Oswald," recently shown in the East (on the "In Search of" series)?

I recommend "Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy" (PBS). The great mole hunt, in a British setting.

Clippings:

473. Mar 1980 [2 pp.] "The FBI Files: A Challenge for Historians" (in the American Historical Association Newsletter). By the chairman of Historians for Freedom of Information.
474. May-June 1980 AHA Newsletter; summary of pro-FOIA testimony of historian R. Kirkendall to the Senate Intelligence Committee.
475. 1980 The Historical Journal (Great Britain) [5 pp.] A review of several CIA books by R. Jeffreys-Jones, Univ. of Edinburgh.
- * 476. 1 Jul 80 Chicago Tribune; James Coates on the Defeo Report on the DEA; re Panama assassination plots, Hughes, Conein, etc.
- * 477. 22 Jul 80 NYT; surprise: a mostly favorable review of Tony Summers' book by Christopher Lehmann-Haupt.
478. 15 Aug 80 Ch. Trib; "Mobster who didn't talk freed from jail" (Dominick Blasi, Giancana's chauffeur and bodyguard.)
- ** 479. 17 Aug 80 Honolulu SB&A (reprinted from the Dallas Times-Herald) [2 pp] "Morbid search for JFK conspiracy," by Doug Bedell and Hugh Aynesworth. Truly disgusting. "The origins of the so-called 'grassy knoll theory' of a second gunman can be traced to the simple mistake of a Dallas Morning News reporter [who wrote that gunfire came over her right shoulder]." Lane, Epstein, Garrison, Eddowes. Can anyone send me the original version from the DTH?
480. 18 Aug 80 Boston Globe; positive review of Summers' book by Mark Feeney
481. 24 Aug 80 Chic. Trib (Coates); "'Pizza Wars' bring death to mozzarella mobsters"
- * 482. 31 Aug 80 (London) Sunday Times [2 pp.] "The [Nugan Hand] bank, the CIA, heroin, and murder"
- * 483. 29 Sep 80 Forbes [9 pp.] "The Invisible Enterprise" (organized crime), by James Cook. Basic facts and figures on a \$150-billion-per-year problem. "Indeed, if war is the logical extension of diplomacy, as von Clausewitz maintained, organized crime is the logical extension of business." Salerno: "Organized crime's legitimate businesses are not being operated legitimately. In many cases, however, this meets the norm in the industry."
484. 5 Oct 80 Chicago Sun-Times (AP) "Oswald impostor idea discounted by expert" (Dr. Baden) [And on the same page:]
16 Aug 80 Editorial, Chicago Tribune, saying Eddowes should be allowed to test his theory.
485. 14 Oct 80 Weekly World News; a first-birthday piece noting that this tabloid is the favorite of the staff of "That's Incredible," the well known silly TV show. With that as background, from the same issue:
- * 486. 14 Oct 80 Weekly World News [2 pp.] "Oswald was innocent - Computer study claims that JFK was murdered by renegade gov't officials." "That's the shocking claim of David Lifton who spent 15 years feeding thousands of facts into a super computer to uncover the truth..." Now that's really incredible. I've been feeding facts into a super computer for years, and it has not once told me who killed JFK. Well, they spelled Lifton's name right.
487. 16 Oct 80 Zodiac; replay of the previous item (WWN not credited).
488. 16 Oct 80 WP; "Connecticut's Dodd, his own [Senate] race in the bag, helping out Carter"
489. 17 Oct 80 Chic. Trib; "Mafia hit man [Fratiano] tells how he helped to kill"
490. 19 Oct 80 WStar; "Susceptibility to extortion brought U.S. charge against Rep. Bauman"
491. 20 Oct 80 Jack Anderson in WP; "Billy's mercenary connection" (Terpil)
492. 23 Oct 80 "FBI's Former No. 2 Man Weeps as He Admits Role in Break-ins" (Felt) (LAT)
493. 24 Oct 80 [3 pp.] Rep. Bauman's letter to his constituents, explaining his problems. (He lost the election.) Bad things happen to anti-conspiracy buffs too, not just to the good guys.
494. 25 Oct 80 [2 pp.] (WP) Ward Sinclair on the role of special-interest groups in the campaign; anti-abortionists were after Rep. Edgar and teachers were supporting Rep. Fithian.

- * 495. 26 Oct 80 AP in WP; "Convicted assassin James Earl Ray seeking clemency" If he gets a hearing, he "will attempt to present to the board exculpatory evidence and related matter, including those responsible for financing the MLK homicide," he said in a letter. Uh-huh.
496. 26 Oct 80 NYT; ad for "Sherlock Holmes in Dallas," a work of "faction" by Edmund Aubrey (Dodd Mead, \$9.95)
497. 26-7 Oct 80 AP in Joliet Herald-News (10/26) and NYT (10/27) on Fonzi's article. Only the former version includes the sentence "But the evidence Fonzi cites to support his assertion [that Phillips is Bishop] is inconclusive."
- * 498. 28 Oct 80 WP, plus AP in NYT & SFC, on agreement by Bolt Beranek & Newman to plead guilty to criminal charges, and pay a \$500,000 fine, for overcharging the government for certain work. The alleged offenses were between 10/72 and 1/78, and apparently included some of the work on the Watergate tapes (but not the JFK tape). This won't help any!
499. 31 Oct 80 AP in SFC; "2 [BB&N] defendants are stricken in courtroom"
- * 500. 31 Oct 80 NYT; "Reagan's Judgment," by David W. Belin, a lawyer, who has written strategy papers for Reagan but has not been active in the campaign "and last talked with him in 1976." Belin argues that while on the Rockefeller Commission, Reagan was as reasonable as Rocky himself, that well known moderate. Rockefeller didn't want to investigate the CIA's foreign assassination plots; Reagan did.
501. 31 Oct 80 NYT; "Katzenbach calls some FBI break-ins defensible" (at Felt trial). "If the government had received a report of an assassin in the TSBD, 'I don't think any law-enforcement officer would have had any hesitation' in authorizing electronic surveillance or a physical search."
502. 3 Nov 80 Time; article on the health of Presidents and candidates. "JFK spoke to intimates of 'my Addison's disease,' but the public was told that he had 'a partial adrenal insufficiency'."

[The following are from the S. F. Chronicle:]

503. 9 Oct 80 (From LAT) "1976 threat to Carter: Secret Service hunting sniper" (Joseph Paul Franklin, suspect in the Vernon Jordan shooting.)
504. 9 Oct 80 Maxine Cheshire (WP) on Nugan Hand Bank [2 pp] "Missing millions, mystery death - a tie to Carter folks"
505. 12 Oct 80 "Decent Drunks and Congressmen" (Jimmy Breslin on Bauman et al.)
506. 14 Oct 80 (AP) "New Army chemical test disclosure" (1969 Maryland tests)
507. 15 Oct 80 (AP) "Gloria Swanson recalls her affair with Joseph Kennedy"
508. 16 Oct 80 (UP) "Witness [Brownell] cites FBI's 'break-in' authority"
509. 17 Oct 80 (AP) "Mafia informer [Fratianno] points at buddies in court"
510. 19 Oct 80 "Probe of [SF] plumbers union head [Joseph Mazzola] - Feds charge pension fund assets are 'endangered'"
511. 20 Oct 80 "FBI 'tricks' against NY Panthers revealed" (from NYT)

[Thanks to Blakey (#466-7), Ewing (483, 488, 490-1, 493-5), Goldberg (468-72, 496, 497B, 498), Lambert (502), Lee (487), Liao (492), Meagher (496, 498, 500-1), Meek (478, 481, 484-6, 489, 497A), Owens (473-5), Rubinstein (476), Summers (477, 479-80, 482)]

Queries:

Does anyone have a recent piece in the Louisiana History Journal by Michael Kurtz, a Louisiana professor? Does anyone know anything about Prof. William Chambliss (Delaware)? And does anyone have the footnotes missing from Prof. Evica's book (i.e. the notes for pages 162-179)?

Other newsletters: "Organizing Notes" is published 8 times a year by the Campaign for Political Rights (201 Mass Ave. NE, DC 20002; cost not indicated). Each issue includes a few pages summarizing newspaper and magazine articles of interest. The latest issue covers the Felt trial, the agent-names bill, etc.

Most of the September 22 issue of TCI is reprinted excerpts of newspaper stories on the Eddowes affair. I've listed many of them already; there also is a piece on the Buddy Walthers bullet photos, two reviews of Dave Martin's book, and a summary of Jack White's forthcoming rebuttal of the HSC's photo analysis.