

501 East 87th Street
New York, N.Y.
10028

April 17, 1977

The Honorable Chris Dodd
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.
20402

Dear Congressman Dodd;

Because I am covering the House investigation for NEW TIMES I have done my best up until now to divorce my role as a student of the Kennedy assassination from my present role as a journalist. However after receiving a copy of the accidentally released March 17 Executive session transcript from another friend in the media I find myself unable to ignore a section of the transcript which was largely glossed over by most of the press because of their lack of understanding of the basic facts of the case. I am referring to the briefing given the committee by Robert Tannenbaum regarding leads currently being pursued by the staff.

Mr. Dodd, I must be frank in telling you that I was appalled to find that in his seven months ~~with the committee~~ Mr. Tannenbaum has apparently learned next to nothing about the case, and takes seriously several leads that are dismissed as nonsense or disinformation by most, if not all, of the more knowledgeable critics. If this is allowed to go uncorrected the end result will be an investigation that will make the Garrison probe shine by comparison. What troubles me the most is the suspicion that what is revealed in the transcript is but the tip of the iceberg. If this is the material Tannenbaum feels is credible enough to present to the committee I shudder to think about what he is holding back.

Specifically, I was struck by the following:

-- Tannenbaum begins his presentation with a description of a "new" witness who states that she was introduced to "Lee Harvey Oswald of the CIA" by Jack Ruby. This witness also claims to have taken a film of the assassination which was later confiscated by two agents, one from the FBI the other from the CIA.

I believe you have already received a letter on this witness from Paul Hoch as a result of the inclusion of her tale in the most recent committee report. Her real name is Beverly Oliver, and I first heard her story over two years ago from Richard E. Sprague. I doubted its veracity then, and I doubt it even more now since significant aspects of her story have changed. This "witness" who claims to be the elusive "Babushka Lady," an unidentified woman who appears to be holding a movie camera and appears in several photographs of Dealey Plaza taken during the assassination, is written up in books by Penn Jones, Jr., and Gary Shaw. Shaw states further that she was also present at a meeting between Jack Ruby and Richard Nixon. This woman's tale is so wild that I am amazed that it is given any amount of credibility by the committee. To begin with she claims that she did not know what CIA stood for when she was introduced to Oswald. I find it almost inconceivable that anyone would remember three random letters if they held no meaning to that person. Her story about the visit by an FBI man and a CIA man is equally unbelievable in view of the rivalry between the two organizations. In fact, when Mrs. Oliver originally recounted her story a few years back she said the visitors were Texas Rangers, and her only testimony regarding Oswald was that she thought she might have seen him once with Ruby at the Carousel Club. Examination of the Dealey Plaza photographs reveals a "Babushka Lady" that appears to be somewhat heavy-set and middle-aged. Mrs. Oliver was a stunning young lady of about seventeen with a statuesque figure at the time.

-- Tannenbaum's excitement at the testimony of the Parkland Hospital head nurse reveals a lack of understanding of some of the most basic aspects of the case. The fragments referred to by Nurse Bell seem to be the same ones referred to in the Warren Report. The FBI acknowledged possession of three small fragments which were taken from the Governor's wrist. Certainly Tannenbaum should have researched this point before jumping to the conclusions implicit in his briefing. To be sure the single-bullet theory cannot stand extensive scrutiny, and there is cer-

tainly evidence of too many fragments with too much cumulative weight, but one need only gain knowledge of the "old" evidence to demonstrate this fact.

In describing Connally's wounds, Tannenbaum reveals that he doesn't even know where they are. He seems to be describing four torso wounds while missing the wrist wound altogether. Though it seems ambiguous from his language it appears conceivable that Tannenbaum is not even aware that the magic bullet (CE 399) was not found in Connally, but rather was discovered by an orderly after it rolled out from under a stretcher presumed by the Warren Commission to have been Connally's.

-- I do not know what the committee thinks about the story told by Willem Oltmans re. George De Mohrenschildt, but there are aspects of it that defy credibility from the outset, none of which seem to have occurred to Tannenbaum. The biggest problem is the fact that it seems unlikely that Oswald and De Mohrenschildt ever saw each other after April 15, 1963 when he and his wife Jeanne paid the Oswalds a visit. Shortly thereafter Oswald left for New Orleans and De Mohrenschildt for Haiti. Another problem is that De Mohrenschildt doesn't seem to have ever mentioned the name of H.L. Hunt until three weeks after the DALLAS MORNING NEWS first ran the story about the note allegedly written by Oswald to a "Mr. Hunt." It seems unlikely that De Mohrenschildt could have been middle-man in a conspiracy while physically separated from the alleged assassin by so many miles. Furthermore, De Mohrenschildt's protestations after the assassination that Oswald must have been a patsy seem out of character for the person who supposedly put the rifle in his hand. From a strictly personal point of view I find myself wary of any conspiracy that places Oswald in the Depository as one of the assassins. I feel that the evidence incontestably proves that Oswald never fired a shot.

-- In describing the arrest of Eugene Hale Brading, Tannenbaum states that a shot fired from the Dal-Tex Building is consistent

with a bullet that struck a curbstone on the south side of Elm street. This is a theory of Richard E. Sprague which, to my knowledge, has never been scientifically substantiated. It could well be that this is the case, but it should be treated as no more than an hypothesis until the probability of such a trajectory can be scientifically determined. I am likewise disturbed by Tannenbaum's inferences regarding connections with Shaw and Ferrie. I know of no evidence that satisfactorily establishes that either man participated in a conspiracy to kill President Kennedy. There is a big difference between establishing some connections between these persons and Oswald and establishing their participation in such a plot. Certainly this too should be explored, but Tannenbaum's briefing seemed to me to imply an assumption of guilt. Again I detect the influence of Richard E. Sprague who is a vocal apologist for Garrison and implies that Garrison proved his case and failed to obtain a conviction only because the jury was gotten to. Tannenbaum also errs in recounting testimony placing Shaw, Oswald and Ferrie together in Clinton, Louisiana in the company of "anti-Castro groups." There was persuasive testimony placing the trio together in Clinton, but there was no testimony linking them with anti-Castro groups there. The occasion of the alleged event was a voter-registration drive.

-- Finally Tannenbaum discusses a doctor who was a resident at Parkland Hospital on the day of the assassination, basing his comments not upon first-hand testimony but rather on the second-hand assertions of a "friend" who "has come forward and told us about this." This resident appears to contest the official description of the wounds as described by the Warren Commission. Quoting Tannenbaum: "It was his impression that an entry wound on the governor's body; there was an entry wound on the governor's body." This is the first I have heard that all of Connally's wounds were exit wounds. Evidently the assassins were hidden inside Connally's abdomen. Obviously Tannenbaum is confused and means to say something other than what he said, but the very idea of relying upon this type of second-hand testimony when the committee has merely to order a physical examination of Connally

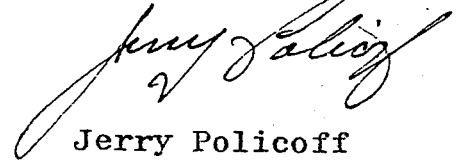
strikes me as imbecilic. It seems unlikely that Connally's wounds are other than was represented by his physicians. Kennedy's wounds are, of course, quite another matter entirely. Tannenbaum repeats the second-hand assertions that the resident attempted to examine the President's wounds and was rebuffed, "which by his experience he deemed to be quite unusual." Just how often in this "resident's" experience did he attempt to examine the remains of a dead President of the United States?

Mr. Dodd, what really disturbs me about all of the above is that Mr. Tannenbaum (who I am pleased at least seems to be convinced that there was a conspiracy) seems to be relying for his expertise on Richard E. Sprague and is ignoring several scholarly experts whom he is going to have to consult if he is to conduct a meaningful investigation. Sprague has done a masterful job of collecting and collating photographic evidence relevant to the Kennedy assassination. He is a friend of mine and I like him a great deal. When it comes to theories about the assassination, however, Sprague is prone toward the wildest of fantasies. By no stretch of the imagination can he be called a true scholar with regard to the minutiae of the case. People like Paul Hoch and Peter Dale Scott of Berkeley; Howard Roffman of Gainesville; Mary Ferrell of Dallas; Mark Allen of Washington; and a few others who do possess this scholarship have been virtually ignored by the committee. At one point the committee went so far as to send out form letters to the critics requesting relevant photographs and documents.

I understand that controversy will arise from extensive dealings with the critics. But the alternative is an investigation that, without their considerable experience and expertise, will inevitably lead down blind alleys and false trails and in the end will produce nothing except more questions for future historians to ponder. Can you even imagine any other subject where it would be considered controversial for a Congressional investigation to consult experts regarding the subject under investigation?

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. I am also enclosing for your information a memorandum prepared by me last year at the request of committee staff regarding how the committee should proceed.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jerry Policoff". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Jerry Policoff

501 East 87th Street
New York, N.Y.
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October 11, 1976

Mr. Rick Feeney
Office of the Honorable
Thomas N. Downing
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

Dear Rick;

Following, per your request, are some of my thoughts as to how the select committee investigating the Kennedy assassination should proceed:

- I. Regarding the medical evidence, I would caution that extreme care is necessary. As I have suggested earlier, I would strongly suggest consultation with Howard Roffman on this subject because of his extraordinary research in this area. Harold Weisberg's knowledge is also exceptional in this area. Specific questions include:
 - a) Why were so few people who had seen the President's body called as witnesses (and why were some who were called not specifically questioned in this area) in view of the ambiguity as to the location of the back wound? An effort should now be made to find and question every one who saw the body, and also to determine if they were ever questioned during the life of the Warren Commission.
 - b) At the Clay Shaw trial Colonel Pierre Finck, one of the autopsy surgeons, conceded under cross-examination that military brass took charge of the autopsy and prevented dissection of the back wound to determine the path of the bullet. Why? Who were these individuals?
 - c) Under whose direction did Commander Humes destroy his autopsy notes?
 - d) Why were ambiguous non-fixed points used as measuring points in the autopsy report? In contrast, the long suppressed Burkley death certificate uses two fixed points -- the spinal column and the third thoracic vertebra (resulting, incidentally in a location significantly lower than that found in the autopsy report and the testimony of the doctors).
 - e) What has been the chain of possession of the autopsy material? Who has had access, and under what circumstances?
 - f) Executive Session transcripts of the Warren Commission refer to the Commission having seen at least some of the autopsy photos. A photo of the back wound is said to show it below the shoulder. There is other evidence to support the inference that this material was, in fact seen by at least part of the Commission. Why was this fact suppressed, and why do current

descriptions of the material refer to only one photograph of the back wound in which its location is ambiguous because of the position of the body and the placement of a ruler on top of the spinal column?

- g) Why are there now no x-rays of the extremities when full-body x-rays are reported to have been taken?
- h) Why do current examinations of the autopsy material locate the head wound some four inches higher than its location in the original autopsy report?
- i) Why do fragments now appear in the throat when the autopsy doctors swore there were no such fragments? Assuming the authenticity of the autopsy material, and in view of the near pristine condition of CE 399, what does the existence of these additional fragments do to the continued viability of the Single-Bullet Theory?
- j) Are the wounds not only consistent with all shots coming from behind (according to the photos and x-rays), but also consistent with having resulted from the type of rifle and the type of ammunition alleged to have caused them?
- k) Where are the apparently missing photographs known to have been taken of the chest cavity?

II. All major evidentiary tests undertaken by and for the Warren Commission should be re-done. This would apply particularly to the Neutron Activation Analysis.

III. Exculpatory evidence on Oswald should be considered thoroughly. The Warren Commission began with an assumption that Oswald was guilty (as its internal working papers prove) and dismissed such evidence out of hand.

IV. The committee should investigate evidence that there is an on-going campaign being waged to point the finger at Castro. Those connected with these allegations have curious inter-relationships:

- a) Jack Anderson -- Associates and sources include Edward P. Morgan, Frank Sturgis, and Hank Greenspun. Anderson owns a piece of Greenspun's LAS VEGAS SUN.
- b) Edward P. Morgan -- Lawyer for Howard Hughes, Hank Greenspun, and John Roselli. Negotiated the sale of the Desert Inn from "Moe" Dalitz to Howard Hughes. Initial contact in the deal was Greenspun who received a part of Morgan's finders fee. Morgan was Anderson's source on the Castro stories. Dalitz has connections with Eugene Brading, arrested in Dealey Plaza on the day of the assassination.
- c) Hank Greenspun -- Close friend of Mahey, Anderson, and Morgan. Had close ties to Hughes which ended at the same time Mahey's

did. Performed public relations for Dalitz' Flamingo Club.

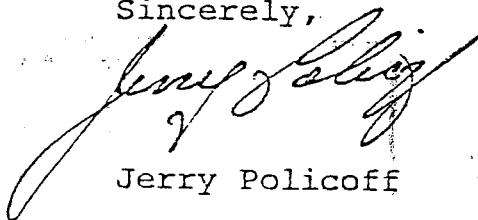
- d) Frank Sturgis -- Friend of Anderson's since Bay of Pigs. Investigated by Warren Commission in 1964 because of his leaks to the Miami Herald implicating Castro in the assassination. Has had Organized Crime connections.
- e) Lonnie Hudkins -- Reporter involved in implicating connections between Oswald and the FBI and Castro and the assassinations. Allegedly was involved in a planned CIA contract assassination aimed at Cheddi Jagan. Had pre-assassination ties to the Dallas White Russian community with which Oswald associated.

V. Some method should be found by which staff will be able to take sworn depositions if all the crucial testimony is to be taken, as it should be, under oath.

VI. Beware of disinformation (e.g. McDonald). Be prepared for a flood of trivia from the FBI and CIA.

I hope the foregoing is of some help. If you have any questions I am at your disposal and will do anything I can to be of assistance to you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jerry Policoff". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Jerry Policoff