

12 December 1966

Dear Tom,

If I am correct in thinking that you are a critic of the Warren Commission, then it seems to me that you were the first critic to see the Zapruder film. Nothing prevented you from doing all of those things which you tax the other critics with not having done, or having done unsatisfactorily.

But I have a growing impression that you are, first and foremost, a critic of the critics of the Commission, and that you have not yet found merit in any of their work.

You say that the basic prerequisite is a political approach to the assassination and you ask "Why do you fight it?" That is an offensive question, although you may not have intended it as such, which implies intellectual dishonesty and moral cowardice. I do not "fight" but I do reject a political approach which I regard as merely the other side of the coin of the ultra-rightists. They take the approach that there was a political conspiracy, that it was hatched in the Kremlin or in Havana, and they are beginning to fill the newspaper columns with vicious innuendo and charges of a Communist plot. The evidence, material and circumstantial, they regard of course as irrelevant and extraneous, since they know already who the guilty parties are.

I have no intention of imitating or echoing from the left what the Henry Taylors and the Revilo Olivers declaim from the right. The evidence establishes the fact that there was a cross-fire but not whose fingers were on the triggers nor the identity of the principals who commissioned the executioners. As a researcher, that lack of evidence restricts me from uttering pronouncements about the identity of the assassins. I have set myself the task of seeking to expose the Warren Report as a fraud, and of establishing so far as possible an inventory of the known facts and evidence, objectively compiled. I do not make unsupported claims.

This is not to say that I repudiate all political speculation about the motives for the assassination. I draw a line between responsible political speculation which welcomes and encompasses factual inquiry as a tool that will lead to the truth, and political speculation which is incompatible with and antagonistic to fact-finding. And I see no dearth of responsible political speculation since at least one publication has been engaging in it since November 23, 1963. I draw a line also between factual and evidentiary research ~~research~~ and the analysis of the political significance of the crimes. These are jobs for two different kinds of people, and I question that either the researcher or the editorialist can do both jobs competently. For a researcher to accuse "the government" (whatever his private convictions may be) would be to dignify the doctrinaire unsupported accusations against Castro and/or Khrushchev by the ultra-right.

While I cannot take the time to elaborate my position further, I hope that this necessarily compressed statement will not lend itself to misinterpretation. Let me suggest, in a friendly spirit, that the time and effort spent in reprimanding the critics for their shortcomings can better be used to do directly and effectively what you consider has been done inadequately by others.

Yours sincerely,