

March 4, 1974

Dear Mr Weisberg

I was on the point of writing to Dr Lattimer about his articles on the Lincoln and Kennedy assassinations when your letter arrived and led me to reflect on the ironic contrast in the two correspondences. Dr Lattimer and I do not see eye to eye; our letters are fencers' thrusts and parries, formally polite and objective in tone. You and I agree the Kennedy assassination was covered up by the government; our correspondence is a miniscule version of the struggle between David and the Philistine. How strange!

It was good to hear from you. I think our correspondence is progressing and can be fruitful. Exchanges of ideas cannot be harmful and the delineation of truth can be only beneficial. Don't you agree?

For the present I ask your help in dispelling confusion. If I read your letters correctly the information I asked of you is already published in the transcript of the trial of Clay Shaw. It is difficult to understand then why you refuse to discuss it with me. Would you explain that please? Do you have a copy of the transcript? Will you lend it to me if you have it? In connection with the transcript you refer to a "Kenney" and an "Oser," a "ggod lawyer." Who are these individuals? What is their connection with the Kennedy assassination?

A second point: in one letter you wrote you need editorial assistance; in another you accept my offer to undertake it as "genuine;" but thought it impracticable and too late; in your last letter you think editing your 600-page manuscript of a third of a million words (over 500 words per page?) would be harmful in part because it would entail work and expense in retyping and reindexing the revised manuscript. But haven't you overlooked the provision of my offer that neither editing nor typing would cost you anything if the funds could be secured? And that you would be the sole and final judge of the revision?

There are other points but let us clear up the mystery surrounding Dr Burkley. You ask me what makes me think he had any role in the Kennedy assassination. Consider the following:

1) As the president's physician Burkley accompanied Kennedy to Dallas and rode in the motorcade

2) He accompanied the president to Parkland Hospital

3) In trauma room one Burkley witnessed the effort to save the president. He assisted his medical colleagues; he advised them of the need to administer cortisone. He saw the tracheotomy executed. He asked Dr Kemp Clark to write a death certificate and took it with him to Washington

4) Burkley was present at the autopsy. He witnessed the puzzlement of the autopsy surgeons who found a bullet wound of entry in the president's back, no apparent wound of exit, and no bullet in the body, but apparently made no mention of the tracheotomy which the autopsy surgeons learned about later, on the following day, in telephone conversation with the Parkland Hospital doctors. Burkley also witnessed the restrictions imposed.

imposed on the autopsy surgeons, two of whom were naval officers, by an army general in a naval hospital.

5) Afterward Burkley wrote a second death certificate, giving the location of the back wound as "at about the level of the third thoracic vertebra." His office issued the official autopsy report, containing, as is now established, gross errors and false findings. And Burkley collected "complete protocol" of the medical evidence, including the notes and reports of the Parkland doctors who were induced to modify their views of Kennedy's anterior neck wound.

6) Notwithstanding Burkley's activity and knowledge in and of the events attending and following the assassination he was not a witness in the hearings held by the Warren Commission, nor did he give it a sworn deposition or an unsworn statement. His death certificate was not published by the government.

7) Critics of the Warren Commission have not explored the mystery of Burkley's testimonial inconspicuousness.

Is this last point applicable to your own writing? How can one tell if you will not say? Your books lack indexes. I have read them, of course, and have looked through them hurriedly before writing this letter but found nothing about Burkley. Did I overlook something? If you have not discussed the mysterious doctor in your extant books do you/do so in the large work awaiting editing and publication? Or is it your view, as it appears to be Lattimer's, that Burkley is of no importance? I can conceive of an unflattering reason for Dr Lattimer's taking that attitude, but not you. Can we agree, at least, on that? plan to

There's another matter, much more important, I am sure, than the mystery of the rear-admiral, presidential physician. That's your hope of completing another book you have begun - Agent Oswald. The title's ominous. I would like to know but wont ask you what's in the book. I want very much, however, to discuss with you Oswald's role in the assassination and offer the following as a starting point:

Oswald was framed as the sole killer of president Kennedy

The physical evidence and collateral data exclude him as a gunman

The political evidence excludes Oswald as an assassin, establishes the motive for the assassination, and indicates its socio-economic source

Nevertheless minor mysteries abound. Among these are the identities of the killers and of their employers and protectors, the killing of Tippit, and the exact nature of Oswald's relationship to the assassination. With regard to the last, for example, there is the problem of his attendance at a motion picture theater less than hour after the president was shot in the vicinity of Oswald's place of work.

My view, from the beginning, has been that Oswald's political line, as expressed in correspondence, writings, conversations, and in acts, excluded motivation on his part for assassination. And political motivation, obviously, which the Warren Commission admitted it could not find in Oswald, is the key to the decapitation of the most powerful state in history. Nevertheless a body of evidence suggests a possible connection of Oswald with individuals and events which made him the victim of the plot woven around Kennedy and him.

Is this your view, too? Or do you hold with the idea Oswald was a government agent posing as a disillusioned revolutionary and was framed by plotters in the government? Or do you have another opinion altogether?

In any case I would feel privileged if you would give me the opportunity your manuscript. You could regard the offer as one of logistic support for the front lines.

I appreciate your intention to make me over but do you think it practicable at our ages? I notice you signed your last letter Harold W. Do you want to drop the W? You can call me

Thomas