

3 August 1965

Dear Representative Ford,

I should like to thank you sincerely for your letter of 8 July 1965. I appreciated your suggestion that Mr Lee Rankin might better be able to provide answers to my questions; accordingly, I sent him the self-explanatory copies of our exchange of letters. This I did with some pessimism, I must admit, because I had already written twice to Mr Rankin on another facet of the Warren Report without any reply whatever. As I feared, he has also ignored your reply to my letter—a discourtesy which I do not appreciate.

It is a matter for concern that legitimate questions raised by a responsible person should meet with rude silence. It makes a most unfortunate impression when persons who had a major role in the work of the Warren Commission refuse to fulfill what is a distinct moral obligation. A foreign correspondent with whom I am acquainted recently expressed to me, in savage language, his opinion of a fact-finding process which terminated without arrangements for residual matters and refusal to discuss or clarify important questions arising from omissions or apparent contradictions in the fact-finding report. This gentleman, a journalist of some distinction, told me that his approaches had met with bland refusal to comment, to his indignation. As an American and a taxpayer, I am naturally offended personally by my similar experience, on the one hand, and on the other hand unable to justify to a European critic the policy of silence that astonishes me no less than a foreigner.

With these prefatory remarks, I should like now to return to the subject of my letter of 17 June 1965. When I did not receive a response from Mr Rankin, I decided to search the 26 volumes of Hearings and Exhibits for the desired information. I discovered one report of an interview with Lonnie Hudkins (CL 2003, page 327), but that was concerned with the events of November 24, 1963 and did not relate to Hudkins' later allegations about Oswald and the FBI. I did not find any interviews with other reporters concerned such as Joe Golden (Goulden) or Harold Feldman, nor testimony nor interviews on this subject with officials (other than Henry Wade) who, according to your book, believed that there was substance to the story—that is, Waggoner Carr, William Alexander, etc.

But, Representative Ford, I was dumbfounded by the implications of a passage in the testimony of J. Edgar Hoover, in which he referred to Hudkins without naming him explicitly (5H 116). On its face, that testimony appears to warrant the conclusions that despite the unanimous decision reached at the Commission's emergency meetings in January 1964, as described in the first chapter of your book, it was in fact the "questioned authority" that interrogated Hudkins, repudiated his allegations without have determined their source, and, in effect, investigated and exonerated itself.

Let me say that I do not have serious suspicion that Oswald was working secretly for the FBI. On the other hand, it is difficult to be satisfied with an inquiry carried out in seeming disregard of the Commission's unanimous decision--the more so when viewed against other not-wholly-resolved questions which involve the FBI and agent James P Hosty, Jr in particular. We still do not know the source of Hudkins' story or the earlier story by Joe Golden, nor the grounds which high officials of the State of Texas found so compelling that they brought the matter to the Commission. (I might mention that the other unresolved questions involving Hosty and the FBI have been posed by letter to former counsel who took testimony on the relevant points, thus far without eliciting answers.)

You will surely understand my dismay at finding that the admirable decisions taken by the Commission, as recounted in your informative book, apparently were scrapped, and that a method of inquiry which the Chairman and the members clearly had rejected as inadequate and inappropriate was, in fact, the method used.

If you could persuade the appropriate persons (Mr Rankin or others) to expound on this matter and indicate why my inferences are wrong--if wrong they are--it would be a real service, not to me alone but also to other researchers who are likely to follow the identical path to the same disillusioning climax. It seems to me that those associated with a major historical investigation in which "truth was the only client" would wish to do no less.

With thanks and good wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Sylvia Meagher

cc J Lee Rankin

(No reply received)