

Congressmen Emanuel Celler and Theodore R. Kupferman on "Legislative Hearing" with Morton Dean and Lincoln Furber--WCBS-TV, New York City, October 2, 1966

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Dean You are proposing a Congressional inquiry into the death of President Kennedy and the Warren Commission's Report, Congressman Kupferman. Do you, Congressman Celler, see the necessity for such a probe?

Celler I haven't examined in width or depth the need for such a probe. The Warren Commission touched on a very vital and important topic and of course we should know all the facts and circumstances concerning that dreadful assassination of the late lamented President Kennedy. History demands that. Whether the Commission acted wisely or not, I cannot say. I have great respect for the judgment of my colleague, Mr. Kupferman; he probably has information which leads him reasonably to believe that the Commission did not go vitally into the matter and probably did not come up with answers to all the issues.

Dean Is this true, Congressman Kupferman? Do you have some information that you would like clarified or cleared up?

Kupferman Well, I have some personal thoughts on the matter but as we came to the second year, the anniversary of the issuance of the Warren Commission Report, I was very much concerned with the fact that it seems to have raised more conflicts than it resolved. There was so much criticism that it looked as though we ought to have a look-see by the Congress of the United States as to whether there ought not to be a further investigation. I remember back to the time of the Pearl Harbor situation, where they had a good investigating group, headed by the supreme court justice Mr. Roberts, and yet the Congress followed up with some six Congressional investigations --and I am only asking for one look-see.

Furber Do you think then that those extra investigations were necessary, and don't you think that your investigation might start a whole series more, which really wouldn't end up with any more results than the first one?

Kupferman Well, I would hope that we wouldn't go that far afield. However, the purpose of the Warren Commission really was to provide for domestic tranquillity --to set at least the minds of people in this country as to what actually happened-- and with all the criticism it is obvious that it hasn't done so. What I want to do is to get answers to some of the questions that have been raised.

Furber There's nothing partisan in your desire to have an investigation of the investigators, is there?

Kupferman Oh, no; not at all. In fact my concurrent resolution calls for a joint committee of both the Senate and the House, with the majority party in control.

So that you would actually be directing that investigation, Mr. Celler, and I couldn't think of a better one to do that.

Celler Well, I have enough chores to do already--I don't want to borrow any more trouble.

Dean Congressman Kupferman, have you conferred with any members or intimates of the Kennedy family prior to making your announcement?

Kupferman No; I have not. In fact, I communed only with myself, although I did have some off-the-record talks with other members of ~~the~~ the House of Representatives, who seemed to share my concern about the results of the Report, insofar as it hasn't really settled anything.

Celler Well, don't you think that a Report of that magnitude, on an issue so important, is bound to raise questions, regardless of the nature of the Report--whether it is true or false, or partly true and partly false?

Kupferman I've no doubt about that, but there have been some substantial people, like Richard Goodwin, who was once a member of President Kennedy's staff, who have raised a number of interesting questions as to the results--as to whether there was more than one assassin, for example, as to the bullet, as to the gun. These are things that haven't really been resolved.

Furber The Commission was composed of some very distinguished members: aside from the Chief Justice, there was Gerald Ford of the House; we had Hale Boggs, who was the democratic whip of the House, and others of equal importance. I presume you have confidence in their judgment?

Kupferman I raise no questions whatsoever as to the competence or the character of the people on the Commission. As you know, Mr. Celler, there were some 25,000 FBI reports involved, and over 500 witnesses interviewed, and I am told that there are some 300 cubic feet of documents at the National Archives--some of which I hope will be declassified, for further investigation--but the point I'm making is that with all that, there still have been a number of good questions raised as to the results, and I think that what we are entitled to is some finality, and I'm asking for that finality.

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