

transcript et 5/22/75 - press conference

Citizens Commission of Inquiry

103 2nd Street, N. E.
Washington, D.C. 20002
(202) 546-7500

The Citizens Commission of Inquiry (CCI)

CCI is a private, non-profit organization based in Washington, D.C. The mandate of the Commission is to make the American people, the media and the Congress aware of the obfuscation by CIA, FBI and other federal police organizations of the facts surrounding the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, the focal point of its efforts hopefully to culminate in a Congressional investigation into the cover-up of these facts and the assassination itself.

CCI is bringing together trained personnel who have operated in the past from different disciplines, including: former CIA technicians, former Special Agents of the FBI, photo-analysts, scientists, investigators, writers, lawyers, law professors and students of law and criminology.

Since its formation in mid-February, 1975, **CCI** has undertaken a five point action program.

1. The Commission has demanded, under the newly amended Freedom of Information Act, all material including previously suppressed data relating to the assassination of John Kennedy from the CIA, FBI, National Archives, Secret Service, Department of State and the Defense Department. **CCI** fully intends to bring suit for this material in Federal District courts if it is withheld or not made available during the specified time. Cases will be handled through the ACLU and private attorneys.

2. An internship for the summer has been established by the Columbus Law School of Catholic University of America for law students to work on the Freedom of Information requests, as well as to analyze the materials that are forthcoming from these requests. This internship will be directed by Mark Lane, who teaches law at Columbus Law School, with the assistance of Morton Halperin, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense and now Director of the Project on Freedom of Information and National Security,

and with Bernard Fensterwald, Jr., Washington, D.C. attorney and Executive Director of the Committee to Investigate Assassinations.

3. Extensive lecture tours by Mark Lane for the purpose of educating college, university and community people as to the facts of John Kennedy's assassination and the role the Warren Commission has played in distorting, manipulating and suppressing these facts has been undertaken since March, 1975. To date, all funding for **CCI** is derived solely from these lectures.

4. Education of the American public has begun on a broader basis through hundreds of radio and television interviews. In addition, we expect to encourage the initiation of special television and radio documentary programs and to assist such programs through the Commission personnel and data. Similarly, articles will be prepared for the print media and material provided to investigative reporters.

5. All material and information that is gathered and is analyzed by **CCI** will be made available to Congress upon request. Law students, as well as personnel of **CCI** will serve as liaisons between the Commission and the relevant committees of the House and Senate that are looking into domestic intelligence. Those committees are:

- Senate Select Committee To Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities
- House Select Committee on Intelligence
- House Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights of the Judiciary
- House Subcommittee on Courts, Civil Liberties and The Administration of Justice.

Support for Congresspeople who are members of the relevant committees is being generated by intensive lecturing, organizing and petition campaigns in their districts.

Executive Committee

JOHN ADAMS—Director, Department of Law, Justice and Community Relations, Division of General Welfare of the Board of Church and Society of the United Methodist Church. He is also a member of the Board of Directors of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and recipient of that organization's 1973 Martin Luther King, Jr. Award.

RICHARD BARNET—Co-founder and co-director of the Institute for Policy Studies, he has been an official of the State Department and the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. He is author of numerous books and articles, including: *Intervention and Revolution, Roots of War: The*

Men and Institutions Behind U.S. Foreign Policy, and Global Reach: The Power of Multinational Corporations.

RICHARD BILLINGS—Former writer and editor for *Life* Magazine, he is author of a number of articles on the Kennedy assassination including "A Matter of Reasonable Doubt" and a five-part series on the Garrison case. He is the president of Fact, Research, Inc. and a writer for "The U.S. News Letter" of *U.S. News & World Report*.

ROBERT BOROSAGE—Director of the Center for National Security Studies, an attorney and former Visiting Fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies, he is editor of *Exploring Contradictions: The State and the Corporate*

Executive Committee (Continued)

Economy and a forthcoming reader on the Central Intelligence Agency.

TIM BUTZ—Co-founder and co-director of the Fifth Estate, he is author of articles on domestic intelligence operations, co-editor of *Counter-Spy*, the quarterly journal of the Fifth Estate and a contributing writer for *Air War: The Third Indochina War*.

BERNARD FENSTERWALD, JR.—Attorney and former Administrative Assistant to Senator Hennings, advisor to Senator Kefauver, among other positions. He has been the Chief Counsel for the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Constitutional Amendment and Staff Director for the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Antitrust and Monopoly. He is the founder and Executive Director of the Committee to Investigate Assassinations.

MARY FERRELL—Dallas-based researcher. Since November 22, 1963 she has been collecting and organizing evidence and material that now forms the most extensive personal library on the facts surrounding the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

DONALD FREED—Author, co-author and editor of numerous books and plays including *Executive Action*, *The Killing of RFK* and *The Glass House Tapes*, he has been a member of the Department of Philosophy, California State University and Lecturer in Philosophy of Literature at the University of California, Los Angeles. He is currently Assistant to the Provost, California Institute of the Arts.

ROBERT GRODEN—Photographic expert and optical technician, he has been working on the Zapruder film for the past nine years. His frame by frame enlargement of this film is the most technically advanced analysis, providing incontestable evidence of crossfire and conspiracy.

MORTON HALPERIN—Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, author of several books, including *Defense Strategies for the Seventies* and *Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy*. He is presently the Director of the Project on Freedom of Information and National Security at the Center for National Security Studies.

KATHY KINSELLA—Associate Director of the Citizens Commission of Inquiry, she has had extensive experience in public relations and promotion, and most recently, has directed the organization of lectures and conferences on the assassination of John Kennedy at over 250 colleges and universities across the country. She holds a BA and MA from Simmons College.

MARK LANE—Director of the Citizens Commission of Inquiry, an attorney, filmmaker and author of six books including *Rush to Judgment*. He is a former member of the New York State Legislature, founder of the Wounded Knee

Legal Defense/Offense Committee, and the only critic of the Warren Commission Report who conducted an investigation into the murder of John Kennedy and testified before the Warren Commission.

JOHN MARKS—A Former Foreign Service Officer for the Department of State and the Executive Assistant to Senator Clifford Case, he is the co-author of *The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence* and author of numerous articles in national magazines. He is presently an Associate at the Center for National Security Studies.

GEORGE O'TOOLE—Former computer specialist with the Central Intelligence Agency as Chief of its Problem Analysis Branch. He is author of articles on intelligence and espionage, a novel *An Agent on the Other Side* and the newly released *The Assassination Tapes*.

LINUS PAULING—Director and Fellow of the Linus Pauling Institute of Science and Medicine. He is the recipient of many awards including the Nobel Prize in Chemistry, the Presidential Medal of Merit and the Nobel Peace Prize for 1962. He is the author of hundreds of papers, articles and books on scientific and social issues.

L. FLETCHER PROUTY—U.S. Air Force Colonel, Ret., formerly the official Focal Point Officer for the Air Force and the Department of Defense for contacts with the CIA on all matters pertaining to the military support of Special Operations (clandestine activities). He is the author of *The Secret Team: The CIA and its Allies in Control of the U.S. and the World*.

MARCUS RASKIN—Co-founder and co-director of the Institute for Policy Studies, he has served as a member of the Special Staff of the National Security Council under President Kennedy. He is author of many books and articles including *Being and Doing*, *After Twenty Years: Alternatives to the Cold War in Europe* (with R. Barnett), and *Notes on the Old System: To Transform American Politics*.

STEVEN SOTER—A former Fellow of the Miller Institute for Basic Research in Science, he is presently a Research Associate at Cornell University. He has authored or co-authored over a dozen published scientific papers and holds a Ph.D. in astronomy.

JOSIAH THOMPSON—Associate Professor of Philosophy at Haverford College, he is the author of *Six Seconds in Dallas* on the assassination of John Kennedy, *Kierkegaard*, *The Lonely Labyrinth*, and editor of *Kierkegaard: A Collection of Critical Essays*.

LLOYD TUPLING—Former Administrative Assistant to Senators Richard and Maureen Neuberger, and Washington Representative of the Sierra Club, he is Treasurer and member of the Board of Directors of the Committee to Investigate Assassinations.

For Immediate Release

May 22, 1975

CITIZENS COMMISSION FORMED TO
DEMAND CONGRESS INVESTIGATE
ASSASSINATION OF JOHN F. KENNEDY

Organization Opens Capitol Hill Office -
Thousands of Petitions Signed - Support groups formed in many states -
Hundreds of Law Students and others to visit Members of Congress

Mark Lane, director of the newly formed, Washington-based, Citizens Commission of Inquiry (CCI) announced today that the CCI had embarked upon "a nationwide organizing project to urge Congress to investigate the assassination of President John F. Kennedy and the resultant cover-up of the facts by the FBI and the CIA."

Lane, author of Rush to Judgment, a critique of the Warren Commission Report, a former member of the N.Y. State Legislature and a lawyer who is now teaching law at the Columbus Law School at the Catholic University of America in Washington, had previously testified before the Warren Commission. He said, "Support groups for the CCI have been formed in more than a dozen states in the last 45 days. Hundreds of law students and others from all over the United States will be taking a one week seminar offered by the CCI starting in June. They will then call upon members of Congress to share information about the cover-up of the facts about the assassination."

Mr. Lane who has just completed an unprecedented organizing-speaking tour of 35 colleges throughout the United States has been speaking nightly to standing room only audiences of many thousands.

and 45

The Board of Directors of the CCI includes lawyers, former CIA and FBI agents, photo-analysts and others including Morton Halperin, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense; Col. L. Fletcher Prouty (ret.); Nobel Prize winning scientist Linus Pauling; Bernard Fensterwald, former Chief Counsel to the U.S. Senate Committee on Constitutional Amendment; and John Adams, Director of the Department of Law for the United Methodist Church.

Lane said that the CCI was about to institute legal action for the release of all of the evidence gathered by government agencies regarding the death of John Kennedy under the new Freedom of Information Act.

"Most of that evidence" Lane said, "has been locked away in the files of the FBI, CIA or National Archives and never seen by the American people or by members of Congress." He added "Some of the most crucial material gathered by the FBI and the CIA about the death of John Kennedy was never seen by the Warren Commission members."

"Surely the murder of John Kennedy was a public crime, one which has affected the lives of all Americans. In the wake of the Watergate disclosure it appears that the American people will no longer settle for a top level, top secret investigation which relies upon secret police agencies and which results in a series of untenable conclusions. I believe, from talking with thousands of Americans from California to Arkansas, Mississippi, Indiana, Virginia, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Georgia, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Illinois, West Virginia, Louisiana, Michigan, Alabama, Vermont and Connecticut in the last few weeks that Americans will accept nothing less than a public open investigation conducted by a Congressional Committee which calls the relevant witnesses and asks the relevant questions."

Lane said that the Rockefeller Commission "has functioned in the same fashion as the Warren Commission. It has met behind closed doors, the testimony of the witnesses is top secret, it relied upon the police agencies it said it was investigating and it has utilized the same discredited personnel that the Warren Commission did."

Lane said that David Belin, the Executive Director of the Rockefeller Commission, was the lawyer for the Warren Commission who was "most hysterically obsessed with the preconception that Lee Harvey Oswald was the lone assassin." "That obsession," Lane added "led Belin to play a major part in the suppression of the truth about the death of John Kennedy."

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For further information contact
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Washington, D.C. 20002
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April 22, 1975

Honorable Vice President Nelson A. Rockefeller
Commission on CIA Activities within the United States
Room 45
Old Executive Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. Vice President:

According to reports published today by the Associated Press,
" informed sources say that the Rockefeller commission is
investigating whether the CIA withheld information from the
Warren Commission during that panel's investigation into the
assassination of President Kennedy."

Since I have information that would be of value to a commission
conducting a serious and honest investigation into that question,
I now so inform you of that fact and of my willingness to
testify.

Very truly yours,


Mark Lane

cc. David Belin

COMMISSION ON CIA ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE UNITED STATES
Washington, DC 20500

Nelson A. Rockefeller,
Chairman

John T. Connor
C. Douglas Dillon
Erwin N. Griswold
Lane Kirkland
Lyman L. Lemnitzer
Ronald Reagan
Edgar F. Shannon, Jr.

David W. Belin,
Executive Director

April 30, 1975

Mr. Mark Lane
Citizens Commission of Inquiry
103 2nd Street, N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002

Dear Mr. Lane:

A copy of your April 22 letter addressed to the Vice President with a copy to me was the first correspondence I have received from you since your two letters sent to me in 1966. To refresh your recollection, I am enclosing copies of these two letters.

The first was your July 7, 1966 letter to me which pertained to your commercial movie film, "Rush to Judgment". You wrote: "We offer to screen a pre-release version of the film for you, and also offer you the opportunity to rebut the film on camera--with the understanding that anything you say on camera will be used intact without any cuts, additions or deletions on our part."

Over the next four months I wrote eight letters in which I sought to accept your offer, requesting thirty minutes of rebuttal time on film. You replied to none of these. Finally, after my ninth letter, you wrote on December 19, 1966 and withdrew your offer. Enclosed is a copy of my December 23, 1966 reply which to this day remains unanswered. In that reply I wrote: "knowing how you had distorted the truth in your testimony in Washington before the Commission, I therefore decided to accept your offer. After all, I knew the truth first hand. I was one of two lawyers who had more direct contact with the key witnesses to the assassination of President Kennedy and the murder of Officer Tippit than any other persons in the entire world."

Citizens Commission of Inquiry

103 2nd Street, N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002
(202) 546-7500

May 21, 1975

Honorable Vice President Nelson A. Rockefeller
Commission on CIA Activities within the United States
Room 45
Old Executive Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. Vice President:

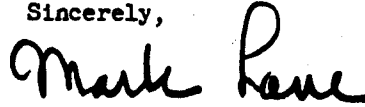
It is my painful duty to inform you that David Belin, the Executive Director of your Commission, has suffered what appears to be a disabling mental breakdown. Although my own training is in another discipline I should offer the opinion that he seems to be suffering from a virulent form of a disease most prevalent on the western coast of the United States, centering primarily in Hollywood, California. The malady is "spurned starlet syndrome". Poor Mr. Belin seems to be in such agony over having lost his chance to appear in a talking motion picture that he cannot separate his duties as Executive Director of your Commission from his feelings that he has been unfairly spurned and denied the opportunity to be a film star. His continued almost hysterical assertions that my investigation of the facts surrounding the death of John Kennedy must be rejected because I have "mercenary goals" and that I through "movie film sales" succeeded "in these mercenary goals" raise certain questions. I should be surprised to learn that you, Mr. Rockefeller, reject the truthfulness of those who have achieved monetary reward. In this instance, since I did not receive a single penny for researching and producing the film in question either through "movie film sales" or in any other form we find that Mr. Belin's imagination is as fertile in 1975 as it was eleven years before when he helped to write the Warren Commission Report. We find that his distaste for careful responsible research as a pre-requisite to making a serious charge remains unchanged.

Many Americans shared with me doubts that your Commission, meeting behind closed doors, excluding the American public from the process of the investigation would ever carry out a diligent inquiry. These doubts were reinforced when you and others regularly leaked information favorable to the agency you were ostensibly investigating. I think that when the American people realize that you have permitted Mr. Belin (a man who for more than eleven years has shown a pathological obsession with the pre-conception that Lee Harvey Oswald was the lone assassin of President Kennedy) to direct your operation whatever residual credibility your Commission may have enjoyed will fade.

Honorable Vice President Nelson A. Rockefeller
May 21, 1975

In my letter to you I stated that I had "information that would be of value to a commission conducting a serious and honest investigation." Mr. Belin's hysterical response to that letter answers most eloquently what kind of a commission report we may expect from you. It also seems apparent that if we are to learn the facts about the death of John Kennedy and the other tragedies during the subsequent decade of deceit that have brought us to the deplorable state in which we have an appointed President and an appointed Vice President such knowledge will come to us through the vehicle of an open public investigation conducted by the Congress.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mark Lane". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the right of the typed name.

Mark Lane

CITIZENS' PETITION TO THE CONGRESS

Whereas, the facts regarding the death of President John F. Kennedy have not been made known to the American people.

We the undersigned petition the Committees of the Congress now examining the conduct of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and other federal and local police agencies and government authorities to investigate the cover-up of the facts surrounding the death of President Kennedy by those agencies and authorities and any other part that those agencies and authorities may have played relative to the death of the President.

NAME

ADDRESS

Series of horizontal lines for writing names and addresses.

Please return signed petitions to:
Citizens Commission of Inquiry
103 2nd St. NE Washington, D.C. 20002 (202) 546-7500

And in the concluding portion of my letter I wrote you that the reason you had reneged on your rebuttal offer was obvious: "You are afraid...afraid of the truth.

"Once again I challenge you, Mark Lane, to thirty minutes on film--that is all I need to demolish your manufactured case.

"And finally, Mr. Lane, lest you wonder why I have been so persistent in writing to you, I can tell you that the reason is that you and I have two entirely different goals. Your goal is obviously to reap monetary rewards out of the assassination of President Kennedy through the vehicle of distortion by omission and commission. In your book you seek to ignore the overwhelming evidence proving that Lee Harvey Oswald was the killer, and sole killer, of President Kennedy and Officer Tippit. And you compound this by deliberate distortion of those portions of the testimony that you discussed. To the extent that your book has been a best seller for these many weeks and to the extent that you supposedly have already received the most money ever paid for a film for a single transmission by anybody in the United Kingdom, you have substantially succeeded in these mercenary goals.

"On the other hand, my goal is the same now as it was in 1964 when I was one of the fourteen lawyers selected from across the country to serve with the President's Commission on the assassination of President Kennedy: The truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

"And, Mr. Lane, as fate would have it, through the vehicle of book royalties and movie film sales you have succeeded in attaining your goals, while at the same time I know that in playing a key role in the investigation of the assassination of President Kennedy and the writing of the Warren Commission Report, I succeeded in my goal of finding the truth."

With the foregoing as a frame of reference, let me turn to your specific request for an appearance before the Commission. Although on the one hand I would look forward to the opportunity to interrogate you under oath and expose your standard operating procedure of misrepresentation of the truth, I nevertheless must go through the procedure we have followed with other witnesses.

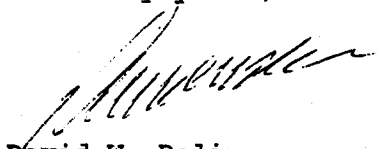
First, we would like to interview you here in Washington. For many witnesses who have requested an appearance before the staff or the Commission, we have asked that they submit a written statement in advance in which they specifically set

forth the factual evidence they want to present. This gives us the opportunity to see whether or not the alleged facts fall within the charter of this Commission, which is limited to finding out if the CIA has improperly engaged in any activities within the United States which violate its statutory charter.

Therefore, will you please send us as soon as possible a written statement in narrative form of the facts of which you claim you have personal knowledge and which you allege constitute unlawful domestic activity of the CIA. You should address this to Robert B. Olsen, Senior Counsel for the Commission, who has been the Counsel who has interviewed witnesses alleging CIA involvement in the assassination of President Kennedy. After Mr. Olsen receives the written statement from you, he will contact you to advise whether or not the facts alleged fall within the charter of this Commission. If so, we will arrange for an interview and also a court reporter to take your testimony before the staff, as we have done with other witnesses who have offered evidence on matters pertaining to alleged CIA involvement with the assassination of President Kennedy. Would you please have your written statement in our hands no later than May 12, 1975.

Also, would you please write to me and advise me whether or not you are now ready to let me have thirty minutes of rebuttal time on film with the rebuttal to be added and become an integral part of all copies of your commercial film, "Rush to Judgment", in accordance with your original offer of July 7, 1966, and my acceptance of that offer.

Sincerely yours,



David W. Belin
Executive Director

Enclosures

Lane/deAntonio ltr to DWBelin
of July 7, 1966
Lane ltr to DWBelin of Dec. 19, 1966
DWBelin ltr to MLane, Dec. 23, 1966