

11/5/72

Dear Tom,

Sorry I can't take time for detailed response to your undated letter that just got here. Time reminds me: I'd appreciate it if you'd include return-addressed envelopes. They save that much time because my typing is so terrible and I have to read them. I don't usually take time to go over the letters, which may appear to be anti-social, but time does press hard on me. I can't do all I feel I should and all I want to.

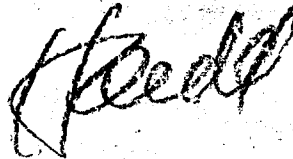
Penn: believe me or not, he has crossed the line and never was of conspicuous responsibility. He is sincere but plain nuts. Of the things you mention, I credit none. If there is significance in the motorcycle pictures, I do not immediately see it. Perhaps I would if I saw them. I believe part of Craig's original story, but he, too, went crazy. I've met him. He is personable and confabulates, a bad combination for the uncritical. There is not the slightest possibility of a snor from the sewer as Garrison invented based on some work that was done for me when Penn would not talk to the guy who did it. The work is fine and significant, the interpretations are wildly insane. I could not keep Garrison within the ranges of sanity on this.

You have what I regard as the proper attitude to this subject and work. We are really concerned with our society in the broadest sense, with the integrity of its institutions.

Sorry I've never prepared any biography. The essentials of my pre-WHITE WASH experience are on the back cover of it. If it doesn't say it, in the period before World War II I was an investigative reporter as a magazine correspondent. I gave many cases to the government when I was working on Nazi cartels, things like that.

Re Zapruder: it is true that the basic things can be seen in the poorest copy. But only such things as head motion at 313, etc. Other things are significant but that one generally makes the basic point.

Thanks and best regards,



Dear Mr. Weisberg,

It has taken Penn Jones a long time to answer my letter and finally send to me the Zapruder film, but I finally received it. I have spent quite a lot of time viewing it and showing it to friends. I agree with you that it is not a Hollywood production and the clarity is not the best, but it does show what happened and that is my greatest concern. Up until now I had to go on the words of others and view the still pictures to find out what happened. Now I can see for myself and show others so that they may see for themselves. This short film definitely abrogates the lone assassin theory.

Penn Jones also included Forgive My Grief II & III, purchased by Tom Bains. When answered my first letter he enclosed a complimentary copy of Forgive My Grief I. I would like to recount to you some of the charges that Mr. Jones has made in his books. To me, they seem plausible. But I would like your opinion.

First, in the Altgens photograph the doors of the Johnson Secret Service car are opening with the first hint of trouble. You pointed this out in Whitewash. The reason for this, says Mr. Jones, is that Secret Service Agents guarding Lyndon Johnson were aware of the plot and were able to be off with the shot.

Second, is that Sheriff Bill Decker knew of the plot and was directly involved because he placed Deputy Sheriff Harry Weatherford on top of the Records Building with a high-powered rifle. This rifle was fitted with a silencer that was obtained 3 weeks before the assassination.

Third, Penn Jones also accuses Gov. Connally of knowing about the plot. He maintains that the Gov gives himself away with the words "My God, they are going to kill us all." "They" meaning he knew of more than one. This in itself means little to me because he could probably tell it was more than one simply by the sound of the rifle fire. But "kill us all" is what Mr. Jones says implicates the Gov. He thought that it was only President Kennedy who was to be killed. The Gov realized that he had been double-crossed when he was struck by bullets.

Penn Jones also included some back editions of the Midlothian Mirror. These contained pictures which are of some importance. The first photo was of Roger D. Craig as he appeared in Will Fritz's office on the afternoon of the assassination. Craig says he identified Oswald as the man he saw running down the grassy knoll to a station wagon. Craig recognized him as he saw him that afternoon. Fritz denied that Craig was even there.

There is also a picture of the umbrella that was dropped on the ground by the "Umbrella Man". It shows another man in the background who wears a long coat, possibly to hide the umbrella that he is supposed to pick up, says Mr. Jones.

But the last picture is the most startling. It shows something that took place immediately after the assassination. James Altgens, with coat open and flapping in the wind, is shown running down Elm Street toward the Triple Underpass in an attempt at a final photograph. But on the right side of the picture, on the north side of Elm Street, there is a motorcycle officer who has dismounted his cycle and is pushing it along the curb until he arrives at his destination, the sewer opening. The reason for this, as Mr. Jones states, is to conceal the man who fired the fatal head shot and might still be crouched inside.

In this same edition of the Mirror, Mr. Jones shows another photo of the motorcycle as it remained perked by the sewer opening, and a crowd gathered and stood directly on top of the manhole cover. It appears that the motorcycle officer did push his cycle directly to the sewer opening, and for only one possible reason; that which Penn Jones states. I imagine that you have this photograph and many more. If you don't have this particular one, I'll send it to you.

A couple of nights ago, I showed the Zapruder film to a classroom filled with officers and "lifers". It was at a college class located on post where I'm trying to finish my degree. The reaction of the class was my main interest. Out of the 35 people present, only 2 persisted in their view that the government wouldn't lie to us. They supplied their own reason for the violent movement backward of the President's head, as seen in the film. They maintained that it was muscle reaction. I cited Dr. Cyril H. Wecht's contention that a muscle reaction could not have caused the movement backward. But these soldiers seem to know differently.

But all in all, the great majority agreed that there was a shot from the front. Using your name and Jim Garrison's, I told them something of what actually happened. The really interested people remained after class to ask more questions. They wanted to hear more and see more photographs about the assassination. Today I'm going to write to Penn Jones about more films and photographs. I was happy with the group's reaction considering their position and attitude to begin with.

The professor, who didn't know my name, approached me at the conclusion and patted me on the back. "What's your name?" he asked. I then told him. "Well, Tom, it certainly is a pleasure to know you. You've got a lot of courage." His reaction pleased me very much.

One thing, though, that I'd like to make clear to everyone that I discuss the assassination with. My desire and aim is not to raise President Kennedy from the dead. Or, to quote Earl Rogers, I don't want "to sit up with the corpse." I simply want to show people what really happened; to help people take a long and deeper look at the present situation; and to make them become so aware and so concerned that they want to remedy the sad state of affairs. The assassination of President Kennedy was the turning point to this ugly situation. The power had been taken away from the majority through the use of force and violence. The American people have been violated and the process started with gunfire in Dallas.

As the President lived, he represented the lives of 190,000,000 Americans. As he died, he represented the death of 190,000,000 Americans. These people must be raised from the dead and their power to shape their future must be returned to them, to their majority. "You have a lot of courage," said the professor. Andrew Jackson once said, "One man with courage is a majority."

Tom Bains asked you about sending us a copy of your latest book so that we may Zerox some copies, including one for yourself. We intend to do this, but due to my reassignment to another unit and Bains' TDY (temporary duty assignment), we won't be able to do this until March. We'll write and ask you for it then.

During my discussions, I hope that you don't mind if I discuss things and mention your name. When I do, people ask me "Who is Harold Weisberg?" and they want to know more about you. All I can tell them is what I have read on the covers and flaps of your books. Could you give me any information that you wouldn't mind telling people that would give an insight as to who Harold Weisberg is. Please reply at your convenience. I'm in no hurry; I'll be here for 384 more days.

Sincerely, Tom Meros