

Draft - April 6, 1970

Mr. Harold Weisberg
Coq d'Or Press
Route 8
Frederick, Maryland 21701

Dear Mr. Weisberg:

This is in reply to your letters of March 13, 16, 19, and 20, 1970. These letters include a total of nine pages.

Enclosed are copies of a letter of March 6, 1970, and the attachments listed in the letter, which we have received from the Secret Service. The attachments are electrostatic copies of documents relating to the autopsy of President Kennedy of which you have requested copies. The list headed "Transferred to Mrs. Lincoln, National Archives, April 26, 1965," is the Government copy of the "memorandum of transfer" mentioned in the Report of the 1968 Panel Review of Photographs, X-ray Films, Documents, and Other Evidence Pertaining to the Fatal Wounding of President John F. Kennedy on November 22, 1963.

The published information concerning procedures under the "Freedom of Information Act" which we sent you does not prescribe the use of a form in requesting documents under the act. We have no form for this purpose. Any request which clearly identifies the document requested is sufficient.

The Secret Service index, which we assume you have in mind in your reference to cards, lists Secret Service Control Nos. 61, 127, 407 (p. 19; "Dave ^{Ferrie} Ferrie"), 449, 620, 712, and 916 (p. 85-86) for David W. Ferrie. The index lists Control Nos. 620 and 712 for Alvin Beaubouef and Melvin Coffey and 916 for Beaubouef alone. There is no entry for Layton Martens.

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The X-rays and photographs relating to the autopsy of President Kennedy have been made available to the doctors who performed the autopsy and to those who reviewed the materials for the Attorney General in 1968.

We shall appreciate it if you will send us copies of the newspaper stories of February 24, 1967, or any other date, which contained a report attributed to this agency that there was a total of 40 pages relating to David W. Ferrie in our custody. This information was not furnished by anyone connected with this agency. We did not see these stories, although we read the reports concerning the matter in some leading newspapers at the time.

As we informed you in our letter of March 12, we sent you copies of records that you requested that we located. The copies included the entire Burkley name file. As we have often stated, we will make records available to you in our research rooms, to the extent that we can, to do the documents-by-document searching for additional material or information which we cannot do.

We prepared the photographs of President Kennedy's clothing to show to researchers instead of the clothing itself. We do not provide copies of these photographs for the same reason that we do not take special photographs for researchers, to avoid any possible violation of the agreement with the Kennedy family.

It is not clear what you wanted from Commission Document 1140 if you did not want any of the pages we sent you. These pages, with pages 2 and 3 which were the only pages you specified you did not want, compose the

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entire document. The document relates to the investigation of Dr. Penabaz's statement that he had seen a Cuban cartoon which depicted the death of President Kennedy about a week before the assassination. We have credited 40 cents to your account for the two pages in CD 301 and two in CD 1107 which you already had.

It does not seem probable that further enlargements of the collar in Commission Exhibit 394 and the knot in CE 395 will be any more satisfactory to you than those we have furnished you, but we will do this if you wish. We suggest that enlargements of the collar and the knot in FBI Exhibit 60 (CD 107), in which the damage done by the bullet is plainly visible, might be more satisfactory to you. We believe you have a copy of this exhibit.

The following numbered Commission documents are missing; 61; 102 except parts o, t, u, v, x, z, aa, and bb; and 1458 except the attachments. Because the time expended by our staff on the records of the Warren Commission is already extensive, we do not feel that we can undertake the additional task of securing documents that are not in our custody from other agencies.

There is no list of the files described in entry 10 of the inventory of the records of the Commission.

Some questions you ask have been answered in previous correspondence. Enclosed is a copy of the regulations for the public use of records in our custody. As you will note on page 8, it is our policy to furnish information concerning records when the time required to do so is not excessive. The time required to furnish the remaining information requested in these letters combined with the time required to furnish

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the information you have requested in the past, as well as the information you will probably request in the future, is excessive. We regret that we cannot continue, in fairness to other researchers, to correspond with you on the present basis. It appears that your continuing interest in matters relating to the assassination of President Kennedy is so extensive that your research purpose could be best accomplished by an examination or reexamination of the basic records that we will make available to you in the National Archives.

We will continue to furnish you copies of records by correspondence when we can do so without spending too much time in locating the records. We will also notify you when specific documents you request are withheld from research, with the reason for withholding, and when specific documents you have requested become available.

We regret the delay in answering your letters, but part of this delay has been caused by the number of your letters and the length of most of them. If you wish to send us long letters for purposes of comment or ^{argument} agreement, we have no objection to receiving them but cannot undertake to answer them. Merely to read these letters is time-consuming. Your specific requests for copies of documents, instead of being scattered through these letters, should be listed separately in letters of not more than one page in length. ~~If we do not reply to your letters or questions, it is to be understood that we do not do so because the time necessary to carry on this correspondence is excessive.~~

Sincerely,

JAMES B. RHODES