

2/14/70

Paul and Gary-Clinton, La., witnesses

I've just read the first of the testimony received today and of which I'd written you earlier. I plan to read it in the order of the list I sent you both. This testimony is as impressive to me as were the people. I met them, except for the black man, the morning the jury-selection began. I believe they all spoke truthfully. This is not the same as saying I believe the meaning their testimony was given. Were it not that one of the men knew Banister and says the driver was not him, I'd be willing to believe this had been Banister (the defense theory).

I was aware of the FBI Clinton evidence before I first went to N.O. I never heard it mentioned there until the above-mentioned day. But because I didn't believe it was Oswald, not buying any but urgent documents then, I ignored those reports.

While I have no way of knowing whether or not Shaw was in Clinton at that time, the perjurious alibi he offered makes me willing to believe it. However, let us disregard all but one thing for our own interests, and let us assume that these people who say they saw him really saw someone who looked like and may have said he was Oswald. I have no reason to believe it was the genuine article. Going up to the backwoods, Clinton being above Baton Rouge, to me destroys any meaning his literature operations could have had, and the time is right after his TV publicity on it. So, if we consider this may have been a counterfeiting of Oswald and I know or no accounting of a moment of his time after the "debate" and until he went to Mexico- does this testimony then have meaning?

The conspicuous indifference of the FBI to reports about Oswald is, in itself, of possible significance. As you read this testimony, if you do, you will note that while some didn't bother to tell the FBI, others did and were told they knew all about it. Not one was interviewed by the FBI. This is inconsistent. Were Clinton not a backwater, I think they'd have done otherwise.

I do not have any of these reports. If you do, I'd like to go over every one the FBI filed very carefully. If you do not have them but have records of those of which we know, I'd like the references so I can get and study them. Standard FBI method was to interview witnesses and write the reports in a way to eliminate interest in them. When they depart from their standard technique, this also interests me. Compare their working on Rowland with their ignoring the Clinton witnesses, including the town marshal. Or their going to Alba's and collecting what they know could not be connected with Oswald and exhaustively and elaborately testing it as though it were.

The next three witnesses are also on this, Dunn another CORE man and the two women employees of the hospital. Both held up. The second, from the personnel office, said the application by Oswald had disappeared, that she had seen it after the Garrison investigation was public. Now, I know a little about that hospital, and they are holding a man, without due process, simply because the Secret Service wants it, so I can believe other things. Moreover, that hospital at Jackson is two miles apart, and the one closer to N.O. is the wrong one. It would not be possible to go there or to get around without a car. And I know this: Moo did not prompt those witnesses. I was there. I know what he told them: just go down, look into the courtroom and see if there is anyone there they can recognize. Moreover, remember the defense had everything Jim had on this and they could do nothing at all with these witnesses. In addition, this also interested Tom at the Archives, for he mentioned it to me after he also saw it. He knew what the FBI had also and certainly told the defense... Nor can I picture Oswald going into that bleak hinterland for about what he could get from unemployment... And don't we know how carefully the FBI investigated everywhere LHO was supposed to have applied for a job? What do you think?