Paul Jones

July 30, 1968

Mr. Thomas J. Kelley
Assistant Director, Protective Intelligence
United States Secret Service
Washington, D. C. 20226

Dear Mr. Kelley:

Much as I appreciate the promptness of your letter of July 26, which required only four days to travel 50 miles, I must challenge its accuracy and call to your attention what it really says and how it will be interpreted. Also, it evades, and I think, with the subject matter, that is entirely inappropriate.

My letter to Mr. Rowley concluded with reference to the Warren Report's statement that, preparatory to the President's trip to Texas, the Secret Service testimony was merely that it had examined its file of threats to the President for the Dallas-Fort Worth area only and for the period ending the day before the threat of the National States Rights Party was tape-recorded in Miami. Because this is subject to a very obvious interpretation, I solicited amplification.

Your letter makes no response at all. If this is the way the Secret Service wants to leave it, with the awful inference that is inescapable, there is little I can do but lament it.

The first sentence of your letter reads, "... all the information available to the Secret Service relating to the assassination of President Kennedy was made available to the Warren Commission ... and, pursuant to the Order of the Attorney General, all information and evidence ... has been forwarded to the National Archives."

If this statement is correct, then I have been misinformed by the Archives. Either the National Archives, custodian of this most important remnant of our national heritage, or the Secret Service, custodian of the lives of our Presidents, cannot be telling the truth.

What are the alternatives?

That the Warren Commission or some executive agency thereafter gutted its files;
That the Secret Service has cleaned out its files, including the originals of documents, the only ones acceptable in court;
That there is willful suppression by the government.

In writing Chief Rowley, I made specific reference to only the Miami tape because I wanted to avoid being in the position of leading him. I did refer to "files" in the plural, for I know there was more than one incident and investigation involved. I have the firm assurance of the National Archives that the records, the existence of which is beyond question from

other official documents in my possession, are not in their custody. If you question this, I will provide you with copies of this proof. I hope that, in dealing with the Secret Service, this will not be necessary.

With all of the official obfuscation that already makes this traumatic event an even greater tragedy, I hope it is not expecting too much to expect the Secret Service to be entirely above-board, to withhold nothing, and to help make available those records the government is required to make available under its laws and regulations, if not its sense of honor and of what is right and proper.

I asked the Archivist to ask you for the identification of the files you provided. For his own unspecified reasons, he asked me to make the request of you. Therefore I did. Aside from my feeling that in the United States such a situation is entirely intolerable, I contest your statement, "We are unable to provide you or the Archivist with the identification of the file or files concerning the assassination in which this material appears." This can mean only that you refuse to, for there is no doubt you can, as there is likewise no doubt you can provide copies, should those in the Archives have been lost or stolen. Unless, of course, the Secret Service has purged its files.

You have evaded on the question of the tape and its transcript. Because I want a firm and inflexible record and believe nothing less is acceptable in a country such as ours, I ask you the following questions:

> Did the Miami authorities provide the Secret Service with a tape recording and/or a transcript of a tape recording, or any other information about a threat to kill President John F. Kennedy, as earlier described?
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> Did the Secret Service turn this or these things over to the Warren Commission, directly or indirectly, or in any other way make it available to the Warren Commission? Does the Secret Service now have a copy or copies?
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> Does the Secret Service have in its files and/or did it in any way make available to the Warren Commission other relevant information, including but not limited to what was made available to it by Miami authorities and the Federal Bureau of Investigation?
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> Did the Secret Service question, or in any other way communicate with, others of the National States Rights Party, including but not limited to Dr. Stanley Drennan, Joseph Adams (J. A.) Milteer, and Jack H. Brown, with respect to one or more reported threats against the President of the United States? And others?
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> I ask the same question with regard to Mr. and Mrs. Jack Charles Cason; Mr. Cason is president of the Texas School Book Depository.

Unless my reading of the Warren Commission material is faulty, I understand that you, personally, were the Secret Service liaison with it. You should know, or your files should show, whether or not this material was provided the Commission.

As an American, I regret having to write any agency of my government, particularly the Secret Service, in this manner. However, I cannot accept the communication that is, at best, evasive, and at worst, false. I believe that the entire national integrity hangs on the conduct of the government in this matter, for reasons I presume you are familiar with, but most particularly because this administration came into power only

because of that assassination and because the President was murdered while it was the responsibility of the Secret Service to keep him alive. You should know, and if you do not, I tell you, that I alone of those criticizing the government for its investigation of the assassination have gone out of my way to defend the Secret Service from what I regard as the false and irresponsible charges made by others, who have said it could have prevented the murder.

The fact is, however, that while it was your task to keep him alive President Kennedy was killed, whether or not you could have prevented it.

I hope you will keep this in mind when you reply and not forget that we are making a new historic record. There has been too much evasion, too much falsehood. On this subject, neither is under any circumstances ever acceptable or tolerable. It is well past the time when the government should have been completely forthright. I hope, belatedly, it can start now.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg