

Dear Sol,

1/5/92

Aside from Stone's alertness in grasping promotional opportunities there are several interesting stories relating to the records of the House assassins committee and their non-disclosure.

The importance of disclosing those records is not the possibility of finding an assassination smoking gun in them. Of this there is no likelihood for many reasons, particularly that the committee did not look for any. Also, they do not exist in official records, there never having been any real official investigation. None was intended.

Stokes may even believe genuinely in what he says but the real interest in seeing those records is to see how his committee worked or didn't work. He may have no glimmer of this, but I'm sure his chief counsel, Blakey, is well aware of it.

While Stone may have had a general interest in all withheld records, it was not until after I made it clear to him that what he said was suppressed wasn't and hadn't been that he switched his criticism. Then I heard from a friend who is one of the two who have led the effort for this disclosure that although Stokes had originally supported it, he told this friend, Kevin Walsh, that Blakey was pressuring him not to. Or, there is an inference that Blakey has something on Stokes.

It is only the records generated by the committee itself that are in issue. Those it got from executive agencies are available under FOIA and Walsh's associate, Mark Allen, had gotten many of them.

Walsh told me that he had trouble getting past Stone's palace guard but once he did and made this clear to Stone, Stone switched to demanding the committee-record disclosures.

Walsh, of course, wanted any support and did get Stone's.

Having that on every screen showing a powerful movie is powerful support.

Before this there were many letters to the Congress. Now there may well be a flood. If they are to be disclosed, processing them will be difficult if the processors are informed or dangerous to the innocent if they are not. I've seen enough of those records to know that they include rumored garbage and are in many ways inaccurate. And they do deal with people.

Thanks and best,

Harold

No Revelations in Files on Kennedy Assassination,

By ADAM CLYMER
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Dec. 27 — Despite the suggestion raised by the movie "J. F. K." that Government files may hide critical revelations about President John F. Kennedy's assassination in 1963, the head of the House committee that in the late 1970's looked into the killing says there is no reason to open the remaining sealed files.

Representative Louis Stokes, the Ohio Democrat who was chairman of the House Select Committee on Presidential Assassinations, said in an interview today that the committee had made public "everything that we thought had any real substantive bearing on the assassination."

The committee reported in July 1979 that Lee Harvey Oswald had shot Kennedy and that neither the Soviet Union nor Cuba, nor any United States Government agency was involved in the killing. But it challenged the 1964 findings of the Warren Commission by saying there was a "high probability" that a second gunman also fired at, but missed, the President.

Mr. Stokes had been urged by another influential senior Democrat, Representative Lee H. Hamilton of Indiana, to ask the House to open the remaining records before the scheduled

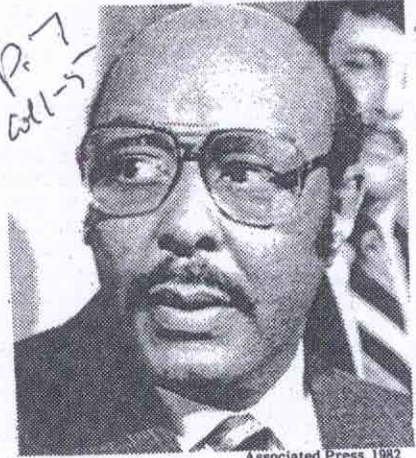
date, the year 2029. Mr. Hamilton said Thursday he thought that keeping the records sealed "only fuels the suspicions and cynicism that many have."

But Mr. Stokes said, "There's nothing in those records that would in any way change the course of history or would reveal something that should have been revealed." He said the material not published in the committee's 29 volumes had come mainly from the Federal Bureau of Investigation and consisted of rumors and a "lot of raw data that would tend to defame, degrade, humiliate or embarrass people" without adding any solid information.

"The F.B.I. reports rumors, innuendoes, things of that sort," he said. "You can't just put that sort of thing out."

Because the House voted to keep the remaining records secret, it would take another House vote to change that policy, Mr. Stokes said. Without the support of the Cleveland lawmaker, now in his 12th term and heading the House ethics committee, there is almost no chance that the House would vote to open the records to the public.

Oliver Stone, the co-producer and director of the motion picture, told reporters here last week that Mr. Hamilton shared his "outrage" that the files



Representative Louis Stokes, who was chairman of the House Select Committee on Presidential Assassinations in the 1970's, said there is no reason to make public sealed Kennedy files.

were still secret and had asked Mr. Stokes to move to get them open.

Mr. Hamilton said in an interview that he had been visited by Mr. Stone

Congressional Investigator Says

The film 'J. F. K.' reopens a debate on secrecy.

recently and had told the film maker of his suggestion to his friend, Mr. Stokes. He said Mr. Stokes had not told him whether he would take any action.

Supporting Panel's Findings

The committee's report supported the Warren Commission's findings that Oswald fired three shots from the Texas School Book Depository, that one of those bullets wounded both Kennedy and Gov. John B. Connally of Texas and that another killed Kennedy.

The committee also found a "high probability," based on acoustical examinations of a recording of radio transmissions from a Dallas policeman at the scene, that one more shot had been fired by a gunman at the "grassy knoll" near the assassination scene. But it said it had no information on who the other gunman was.

Besides the House committee files, there are also records of the Warren

Commission investigation at the National Archives. Sue McDonough, the archivist in charge of the commission records, said the sealed material amounted to about 2 percent of the information collected by the commission. She said it was stored in 20 file boxes.

Some of that material includes income tax returns for Oswald and others; under Federal law, tax returns may not be made public. There is also no possibility that the photographs and X-rays of Kennedy's autopsy will ever be made public, she said. The Kennedy family gave those items to the Warren Commission on condition that they not be made public.

There are also classified reports from the Central Intelligence Agency, the F.B.I., the State Department and the Secret Service, she said. Researchers may seek this information by filing a Freedom of Information Act request, after which the originating agency decides whether the material needs to remain secret. She said such requests had become rare, only "a couple a year."

"We don't get a lot of serious researchers any longer," she said.