

October 29, 1990

Dear Mr. Weisberg,

Having received your shipment, I am more than ever stunned by your prodigious output from 1964-1975. How did you have time to put all of this out? If nothing else, to persevere all those years is truly a remarkable achievement. Surely no one else has investigated this case in any way approaching your depth.

All of which means I'm sorry you regarded my questions as "worse than awful nonsense". As I think you said, I am one of the caring people. To think of how different this country would be today had JFK lived and served out two terms makes me want to cry in despair. I think Kennedy could have been one of the finest presidents of the 20th century. We need not have had LBJ reverse JFK's Vietnam policy 48 hours after the shooting (NSAM 273). We need not have had LBJ, Nixon, Ford at all...

I decided early this year that I owed it to myself to probe this case from top to bottom. To that end, I have tried to devour everything I could get my hands on. After having read three books in the last five years, I have read no fewer than 35 on the assassination since May. This encompasses a lot of nonsense as well as fact. Your work speaks for itself. Meagher's Accessories After the Fact is also a devastating work, in my opinion. Summers' Conspiracy is another work that has been most helpful. Then you have clowns like Hugh MacDonald. What is this guy trying to prove? He has already "solved" the case at least twice. Then you have Robert Morrow's Betrayal ("Jack Ruby planned it all and here is the reconstructed dialogue to prove it"). Robert Groden's work High Treason quotes heavily from Farewell America, which you've already labeled a phony. I tracked it down and was struck by its charges against the Dallas police, not to mention J. Edgar himself. I recently finished Jim Marrs' Crossfire, published last year. He mentions the Oswald exhumation you alluded to and says while the Oswald exhumed appears to be the "real" one, he may not be the one buried on Nov. 25, 1963. He also suggests that Oswald entered the Texas Theater within 5 minutes of the show's 1:00 starting time. I have been looking for some time for interviews with the patrons in the theater. He claims to have found one. The other night on radio I heard a two hour audio tape narrated by Edwin Newman being pitched for \$15.95.

I have also been going through various libraries examining non-coverage through the years by Life, Time, Newsweek, Look, Esquire, et al. The writers change but the coverage never does. Of course the New York Times is in a league by itself, with Harrison Salisbury leading the charge. Today's Charlotte Observer brought it all back home with this headline: JURORS TO DECIDE WHO OWNS GUN RUBY USED TO KILL KENNEDY ASSASSIN. Newsweek did virtually the same in covering this story two weeks ago using the immortal phrase "assassination buffs" and "the window where Oswald squeezed off the shots". One day down the road I would like to write a book on media coverage of the 60's political assassinations.

Going back to the Lifton book for a moment, I simply bought his premise that all the doctors were not lying about the wounds they saw. Why did the wounds get larger and why do they keep moving? Are the

Bethesda lab technicians lying about seeing a body bag and at least one insisting there was no brain? What motivates these people to come forward and lie? Did Lifton pay them off? As Henry Hurt said in Reasonable Doubt, maybe all of this has a more innocent interpretation.

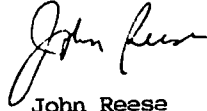
Let's get back to square one. Why was the government so fearful of conspiracy in the first place? So much so that it had to be dispelled at all cost? Were all the agencies cooperating in the cover-up because Oswald had proven ties to those agencies? How can John Connally insist he was hit by a separate shot and still support the official fiction?

You mentioned the documentary you worked on with Gerard Selby which was shown on A&E. Was that Reasonable Doubt? It truly dismantled the single-bullet theory, which was a colossal hoax from day one. Speaking of A&E, did you catch their rebroadcast of NBC's assassination coverage (As It Happened) shown a couple of years ago? I went through it again recently and made my own transcript. It is amazing all the details that poured out immediately after Oswald's arrest. NBC had referred to several previous arrests, but no names were given and they were quickly forgotten. Is it true that Army Intelligence was behind this quick identification? There is so much disinformation out there that I cannot sort through it all.

I have enclosed a copy of A&E's Who Killed Martin Luther King documentary. This is your copy to keep. It is the least I can do to thank you for your most helpful correspondence. I read the first 12 chapters of FRAME UP over the weekend and was most truly amazed. I never knew of all the Percy Foreman shenanigans and this entire subversion of justice. Did he really do that for the money or to gain favor with the government? This mini-trial makes the Warren Commission questionings look like a paragon of excellence. Again I am amazed that you had time to produce this high quality of work. You really outdid yourself on this one.

Thanks again for your time and patience.

Sincerely,



John Reese

P.S. Whose work on this subject (JFK) do you respect?

Mr. John Reese  
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11/2/90

Dear Mr. Reese,

Thanks you very much for your kind comments and for the cassette of the Who Killed Martin Luther King show aired by A & E. I've been wondering, and when I have a chance to look at it I'll know, whether A & E, after its excellent experience with Selby's documentary, bought the US rights to a bad British show on which I'd not have appeared if I had not been assured that it would not conjecture any solution. If that is the show, all the stuff about Ricco and the Canada angle is worse than worthless - it is grossly inaccurate, dishonest and misleading.

You mention that A & E aired what NBC did at the time of the assassination. If it is not too much trouble I'd like to have that for archival purposes. I'll be glad to pay you for the cassette. We do not have cable so I don't even look at the program listings.

I have no doubt that as you say, you are one of the caring people. In my experience, most Americans do care very much about the political assassination and have a good gut understanding of them. But perhaps as you read more you'll come to see what I think I was talking about, the pernicious influence, on you and others, of the bad "solution" books none of which is tenable and none of which brings any new fact to life. As distinguished from theory and supposed witnesses in support of those theories.

I was aware of the rapidity of the policy change as soon as JFK was dead. It was in a small item in the papers on the third day. I don't think I have NSA 273. If you do I'd appreciate a copy.

Aside from the very scare Meagher book, which I'm glad you were able to get because it is magnificent, there is another I recommend highly but it may be even more difficult to get, Howard Roffman's Presumed Guilty. It is perhaps the best simplification. McDonald and Morrow had no principles at all. Each book is 100% fake, fiction. You can make your own evaluation of High Treason from the fact that it uses Farewell America as a dependable source and, as you continue your reading, from your observation that it does not credit original sources and frequently adopts the work of others without sourcing. I've not read Crossfire but understand it is a collection of all the nut theories. Harris himself has not troubled to learn what fact has been established. The baseless notion that it is not LHO who is buried comes from the Britisher Michael Eddowes.

All the major media did fail at the time of the assassination and since then and without that failing we might know more, whether or not any of the crimes could reasonably have been considered solved after the press met its responsibilities. But since it didn't we don't and can't know what it might have done. A book on this, which might have trouble getting published, could be quite worthwhile, valuable.

Lifton is a very bright, very persuasive, very self-seeking and an amoral man who wants the world to believe he owns the subject, as Mark Lane once did. As you continue reading the books you just got you'll see that what he claims as his original work was published long, long before he did his book. He has no new fact in his book and his theory is totally untenable. As he had to know, I won't now take time for that. But on the doctors, on what he says and what High Treason says, enough of the quoted Dallas doctors appeared on the bad "ova show and that after they had been taken in to see the autopsy film. When then came out all said the film represents what they saw.

Whether the Lifton-quoted Bethesda lab people were lying or just innocently wrong I can't say. But on one of the points you raise, the body bag, remember the big thing Lifton makes of the Sibert-O'Neill report? It is in facsimile in Post Mortem. You'll find that in the very paragraph on which he depends they make it clear there was no

body bag. The corpse was wrapped in sheets only. On their insistence there was no brain, they had no way of knowing. All they could say is that in what they could see of the right hemisphere no brain was visible. Of course not. It was, as all know, blown out. But they had no way of knowing what remained and some of the right and all of the left hemispheres were there.

I have to conjecture to respond to your question, why was the government so fearful of admitting there had been a conspiracy. It begins with the FBI. Hoover and the rest, who reacted spontaneously, I'm sure, not under orders, had an instant vision that just coincided with his concept of what was good for the FBI and for himself. He had spent a lifetime making the people believe there was no crime he could not solve and he and the rest had no idea what had happened. The one thing that it could not be criticized for not detecting was a no-conspiracy crime, a lone nut, and nobody in the government even thought of standing up to Hoover. No politician could have hoped to survive it. It may be this simple. It is also not impossible that Oswald had had some complicating connections, as with the CIA or ONI. We have no way of knowing.

Yes, the Selby documentary I recommended to you is Reasonable Doubt.

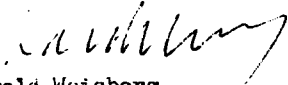
The Texas-based Army intelligence unit was not responsible for the quick identification of Oswald of which you speak but of calling his past to attention. Within a couple of hours.

You ask about Foreman and why he did what he did and again I have to conjecture. It seems to be a fact that he took sensational criminal cases not because they paid him well but because in those days when lawyers could not advertise they brought him the cases that did pay well, often women suing wealthy husbands for divorce. Whether or not he did it to gain favor with the government it had that effect when he was indicted in the case against H.L.Hunt's sons for their electronic surveillances. He was guilty dead to rights, documented, too, and he never went to jail.

Please excuse the haste. I hope I've answered all your questions.

I hope you can sit back and think a bit and see if you can come to understand why I characterize the books that conjecture solutions and palm off all the nutty theories are, in my words you quoted, worse than awful nonsense. They mislead the caring people, as I gathered from your letter you had been misled.

Again, thanks and best wishes,

  
Harold Weisberg