

Dear Hal,

10/5/96

I appreciate the time you took for your long and informative letter of 10/1.

I sent you the letter from the miss. professor so that if you were interested he might have someone dependable in your part of the country.

The Dave to whom I wrote is a Republican friend. I found not only that Kathy jumps to conclusions but avoided me because of that.

I found myself wondering why Lifton praise ARRB so effusively. Their record does not justify that. Either he has an in or he has something in mind.

I've finished all I planned for the ms. on the lawyers, "Honorable Men, and when I did found what I'd laid aside for it and mislaid and forgot. I'm merely filing them together, for any possible future use. I won't at this stage of my life and weakness take time to listen to a tape of the testimony. If the content were to justify it I might write more from a transcript. Depends on how I feel. What I feel up to. *Blood pressure 10/7-200/70.*

On when you come here, it is necessary for me to retire early. That is usually by 5 p.m. because I'm up not much after midnight. So, whatever you mean by "late Sunday" for getting here probably means a short visit. You do not say what you mean by "early" on Monday. Usually on Monday's I have blood tests, then physical therapy from which I'm usually home by 9. Is that what you mean by early, earlier or later? While I do not like to do it I can skip the p.t. and be home from my blood tests by 7:30 a.m. I'll hold both days open until I hear from you.

What you say about Bradley reminds me. Garrison was going to charge him with being an actual Grassy "moll assassin along with Robert Lee Ferrin when two of his staff asked me to try to prevent that after they had failed. I still have the investigative report I gave them that made it impossible for him. The story is, of course, much longer. That was before the fifth assassination anniversary. It is 100 percent unrecognizable in his account of the one trail he never took, that of the assassins. As you may remember, he does not mention me in that. He could not. Some time passed and Bradley visited me. I told him the whole story and ever drove him to Baltimore for him to catch his bus I suppose to go to the right-wing preacher in N.J. Next thing I knew Bradley was badmouthing me back in Calif.

Hermit Hall is correct in saying that Warren should not have headed the Commission. He should not have served on it. Wrong for any justice. As the court told Warren and he told LBJ.

What you say "Amburg" testified to ARRB about is what comes from those who have not done the necessary work on the fact of the assassination, what they theorize comes out. It need not have contact with reality and what Amburg said does not. That is also true of what Liebel said, and that Judenrat Belin always

says. ^{He} ~~Die~~ seeks self-justification and ^{Belin} tries to tell the world that all there is is what he said there is and that it proves him right. His is a different quest for self-justification. ^{Neither} says what he and his had not already said and neither acknowledges that anything else exists. It is interesting that Belin refers to those who do not agree with him as "the JFK crowd." Politically he has always been of the anti-JFK crowd, hence Ford's liking of him.

Di Eugenio is another of the theorizers without the requisite knowledge and who'll never take the time to learn it. Armstrong I do not recall hearing of.

That Lifton urged the donation of the original Zapruder film to the Archives is interesting because it has been there for many years. What can he be up to? He's had an excellent copy for years, with indications it was stolen from NBC-TV in his correspondence with ^mHeagher.

I believe that ARRB is covering its own ass with those hearings all around the country. If any of ^{of} these hearings directed it to know ^{if} existing and withheld records of any consequence I do not recall knowing it.

Look forward to your (pl) coming.

Thanks and best,

Hal

-1-

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10-1-96

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Dear Hal:

First, I want to thank you for sending me a copy of that very fine letter you received from Charles Davis on the staff of that Mississippi College. I totally agree with his call for the formation of "an association of educators" for the preservation of your works. If it is alright with you would you allow me to write him and tell him I'd like to associate with his group even though, by profession, I am not an educator. (I could, however, mention that I did teach a course at S.F. State University and for credit even though I had no credentials as a teacher. In fact, you were once a guest speaker).

Second, I also appreciate the letter (copy) you sent to a "Dave" (whose name I can't recall as a researcher I'm aware of). It is not important for me to know who "Dave" is but what you had to report about what Kathy Cunningham in the March 1996 issue of "Fourth Decade". I agree with your observations on the Humes stuff. She simply hadn't done her homework.

And, of course, as you requested "Dave" not to spread any of this (that Kathy has written) around I will be bound by that, too. I like Kathy but she tends to jump very quickly to conclusions and a lot of it on her misreading of the data. It is too bad but, as you well know, there is a lot of this stuff being printed and with no dissent offered that so called "research" tends to get accepted. I try, as best as I can to counter this by sending off letters or articles to set the record straight. But one person cannot withstand the whole army of "researchers."

As I've recently told some friends of mine who, while they have no understanding of the JFK case as I do, do support my efforts. They sort of chuckle when I tell them that "if there are 100 theories of conspiracy out there, I've read them all and disbelieve them all." (I've added to this observation & I intend to repeat the above at the October "COFA" event in Washington with the added comment: "I've changed my thinking on this observation by noting that I recently received in the mail another book with another conspiracy theory and so I now say: 'If there are 101 conspiracy theories out there I now disbelieve all 101 theories.'")

Members of the ARRB will be out there in the audience (or so they tell me) & they may understand what I'm getting at. But I have a feeling that a good many in the audience will misread my intent and not truly understand my point. So be it!

On what I've just mentioned previously I can recall one assassination buff who told me what Jack White told him after I had stated that I believed the Oswald "backyard" photos were authentic. He told him: "I thought Hal was on our side!"

Now I'll respond to both an earlier letter of yours (dated 9/20/96) and also fill you in on what I learned at the ARRB Sept. 17 hearings in L.A.

To begin with and again I must apologize for not including xerox copies of many items with this letter. I simply could not get to the xerox place (located in Berkeley) but I do hope I can get there this week-end. There is much of significance with xeroxes that are important.

One of the items I will be sending you is a xerox copy of the L.A. Times article on the 9/17 hearings. I know you'll be amused (and, of course, obviously upset by it). The heading reads: "Document tells Soviet Theory on JFK Death". In it the article relates that the KGB "thought" CBS was "behind" JFK's death. I know that is not news to both you and me but if this had been 1963 and not 1996 (when the cold war days are supposedly now at an end) no such headline would've been stated. The writer would've laughed at it and peddle it as "propaganda". It took over 30 years to make "propaganda" now a "straight" story!

The rest of the article discussed (and only very briefly) what went on the hearings. I remember discussing this L.A. article with my friend, Rex, who sat next to

one at the hearings. I told Rex that whoever wrote this article must've been on a different planet than I was. The article made no mention whatsoever about the challenges ~~to~~ the two attorneys for the Warren Commission and the HSCA made (Lebelin and Belin). Although the article did state the attorneys were present nothing was rendered about what Lebelin & Belin offered. (It is no wonder, too, because whoever the reporter was probably knew next to nothing about the JFK case and even less about evidentiary material!). As you can see from the L.A. "headline" about the KGB + LBT it is a "grabber" and intended only to titillate not to inform. Even though I don't believe LBT was "involved" just exactly why does a KGB "opinion" represent an "assassination-related document"?

I must tell you, Hal, that (and I will go into this further in my letter) the praise given by some of the "researchers" present was quite effusive. David Lifton couldn't praise them enough at the beginning of his "testimony" and Tim D. Eugenio (a Garrison defender) also offered them garlands of praise made me ~~fe~~ feel embarrassed. Even when I spoke with certain members of the ARRB after the hearings I would never indulge in this kind of praise. I haven't done so to date & I see no reason to expect to do so in the future. So far whatever criticisms of the ARRB have been raised have been mild, indeed - they never even laid a glove on them!

Before I get further on about the hearings you had requested in your letter certain things & I'll get onto them here-

(1) First, you asked what I could get on the Liebelin & Belin testimony before the ARRB, which you could use for your book, "Honorable Men". I will be discussing some things they said but I won't have a full transcript until it is printed (I'll be writing for it shortly & after I receive it I'll send you the relevant info). By the way my good friend, Joe Backes was present at the hearings and flew in all the way from Albany, New York. If I'm not mistaken he taped the hearings. You may recall him as I believe he visited you last year. If he didn't tape it, perhaps John Judge did the taping. (If you don't have Backes's address I'll send it to you). It may be quicker to get a tape than the route I propose (mailing for the transcript).

(2) Second, if I didn't indicate it before I will definitely be staying in Washington, D.C. from Wed. Oct. 16 through Monday (morning), October 21st. I actually leave Washington Monday (eve), Oct. 21st at 5:30 pm. Since you wanted to know when I could possibly be at your place I think it'll have to be either late in the day, Sunday, Oct. 20 or arrive early morning Monday, Oct. 21. It'll depend on Gary Aguilar's plans. If he rents a car perhaps we can do the Sunday but he might consider Monday better. So leave those two days open, if you can.

Now to get into the hearings,

There were a couple of surprises (as to who showed up). Ray Marcus stayed for the entire hearings & left immediately after the hearings. He asked about you. We talked for about 15 minutes and went over old times. I said I'd be in touch with him again. He has done nothing recently on the case. So far as I know his two monographs on the "Z-film", the HSCA, etc are all he's done recently. I asked him for permission to use material on his analysis of the Z-film & he said I could use anything I wished for my book.

Another surprise—and it truly was one—was the appearance of Edgar Eugene Bradley in the audience! I went up to him, after the hearings & together with my friend, Rex, we talked for about 10 or 15 minutes. Naturally the Garrison case came up and another researcher, Richard Good, came over and tried to literally "grad" Bradley into telling precisely what he was doing on 11/22/63. (Before this I told Bradley that I had attended a press conference back in 1967 in L.A. where he denied his involvement, in fact Bradley said to me, "I thought I recognized you from before". I also told Bradley that I never believed the charges against him, anyway. I said I was then reporting for the "alternative" press and he thought it was Art Kunkin's L.A. Free Press (but I was then with the "Berkeley Barb"!).

Actually Bradley was quite pleasant & even when pressed by Richard Good didn't explode.

7-

Bradley confided in me that Garrison later apologized to him for the charges and it appeared to me that Bradley was holding no lifetime grudge against Garrison (unless he was hiding this very well from me).

So much for Bradley. I also had brief discussions with Kermit Hall, Dave Marwell & Tunheim of the AEPB. I mentioned to Hall that I had read his article on Earl Warren in the Oxford History of the U.S. Supreme Court wherein Hall stated Warren should never have served to head the Warren Commission. I didn't go into questioning Hall why he stated this. If you'll recall I told you about this previously & when I can get a chance to zerox the Hall thing I will. It is on my list of things to send you. I spoke to Marwell & my impression of him was that since I last saw him he seemed to showing signs of stress on his face (the reasons, I believe, are complex but I can discuss that with you when I see you. My instant impression of stress was something I observed - more on that later when I see you. I asked Tunheim what his plans were after leaving the AEPB & he said he'd continue his judgeship position. I also asked what would happen after the AEPB folds & he said some "mechanism" most likely would be offered to guarantee that research would be continued in some form. The "mechanism" wasn't spelled out (I knew he couldn't do this, anyway).

I also had a brief discussion after the hearings with Bob Tannenbaum who testified before the ARRB. Tannenbaum told me he's writing a fictional book on New York City corruption and if I recall I think he said David Belin might be included in the book as a fictional character. I later told Ray Marcus about Tannenbaum's new work & he said to me, why doesn't he write a non-fictional work especially about his role in the HSCA? I agreed but apparently fiction sells better (Tannenbaum said his last book sold well over 1 million).

Now to mention who testified. There were eight ~~names~~ in all & they were in this order = (1) R. Tannenbaum; (2) Eric Hamburg (co-^{producer} author of Oliver Stone's, "Nixon"); (3) Wesley Liebeler; (4) James Rankin, son of J. Lee Rankin; (5) David Belin; (6) JIM DI EUGENIO; (7) DAVID LIFTON & (8) STEVE TILLEY.

On Tannenbaum - probably the best of the lot. He stated (as far as the HSCA) he didn't want to participate in Congress with a "historical fraud". He resigned, he said, because of "the integrity of the evidence in question". Tannenbaum said it was how the HSCA treated Sprague (of the HSCA) that was the ~~crucial~~ crucial point in time when he (Bob) decided to quit.

Hamburg (discussing Garrison & partly his part in making the "Nixon" film) added virtually nothing. Hamburg was also the only one to be called back to re-testify (or answer questions) just before Tilley.

Hamburg was asked - believe it or not - whether his boss (Oliver Stone) would be willing to offer all of Stone's files in making the "JFK" film to the ARRB! Hamburg replied that this was kind of a standing offer anyway. I know all this sounds absurd but I was there to hear it!

Among other things Hamburg "asked" the ARRB to look into was whether the assassination had anything at all to do with the Vietnam war. Hamburg also urged the ARRB to look more deeply into the anti-Castro "angle" involvement. He even claimed that the following anti-Castro groups were definitely involved - the "DRE" - "AGHA 66" - "MRE" - "COMMANDO ---".

Does Hamburg have any idea as to what he's doing or who he is talking to?!

Liebeler offered two "documents" to the ARRB (didn't name them) but then went into a discussion of the "head shot" or what he called the "head jerk and shoulder buckle". He then briefly mentioned Z-3h + the significance of the head moving "forward" at that point" (I can't be sure what his follow-up sentences on this for I was distracted by the audience for a few moments so I missed this "significance". However it is my belief that Liebeler was justifying a rearward shot and then trying to fit it in with the subsequent JFK head and body movement backward. I'm sure the eventual transcript will bear this out).

Then Liebeler went into lambasting the Stone "JFK" film. He said "I'm not going to pay 5 cents for that piece of crap"! Liebeler then went on to say that he was "ashamed" to say that he had never looked at the HSCA report & volumes prior to the JFK film but did so as soon after the film came out (which I assume was 1992).

Liebeler then said it would be a good idea to put on a computer disc when both the Warren Commission & the HSCA are in 100% agreement. (Of course, he made no mention about where they disagreed. For example on when & where on the Z-film the first shot occurred - both got it wrong!!).

The very last part of Liebeler's testimony was pretty revealing, I think. (And since David Belin also introduced this theme in his testimony, I also wondered when Belin talked whether he had talked with Liebeler prior to testifying as to the "ground rules" they would put or "lay on" the AEB. Indeed, as Belin was speaking I wrote in huge letters in my notebook the word "COLLUSION?" & showed it to my friend, Sex, sitting next to me. Sex nodded his head in agreement. Especially so when Belin also denounced the Stone "JFK" film!). This latter theme was the acoustics witness presented by the HSCA (& its being allegedly "debunked" by the National Research Council.

Lieber's "con job" on the ARRB probably went over the ARRB's head (except for probably the very few who've read up on it).

One of the points Lieber raised (among others) that the open mike tape didn't reveal crowd noise (but no one on the ARRB mentioned that even the HSCA found crowd noise was made to be minimal for the mikes anyway). Lieber also made a point about hearing sirens when sirens should've been heard (the claim being, of course, that the tape records something occurring 2 minutes after the shots were fired. In fact, Lieber put it at 132 seconds).

James Rankin, the son of J. Lee Rankin, offered copies of original letters from Warren Commission members back & forth from to his father. He read several of them. These, of course, are admitted as "assassination-related records" & the effusive praise between Commission members was such I wanted to leave the room! This time the "evidence" was not from one of the "nuts", too! (I think if James Rankin's father were somehow able to hear these praises he would've been spinning in his grave!).

Belin was next and as far as I'm concerned he was the "highlight" of the whole show. At first he said he was presenting

a "formal" 9-page typed presentation to the ARRB. (The details of this weren't revealed). However he said his testimony would summarize what the "presentation" consisted of.

Belin then attacked Stone's film, "JFK" (collusion, again?). He compared this film with "Triumph of the Will" (the great Nazi propaganda film). "JFK", he said, was a "triumph of propaganda" + declared it "a hoax".

Belin said he was here to defend the conclusion of the Warren Report (Oswald did it alone - no conspiracy). He reminded his audience that the very first Commission meeting with Warren established the now worn-out phrase, "Truth is our only goal." (I tried to suppress my laughter - it was hard for me to do!)

Belin then discussed the Tippett murder. He said Tippett was killed 41 minutes after the assassination. (Now, of course, as we all know Tippett was killed well before this time + since Belin wasn't being sworn in - anything goes!). Belin then uttered this delicious contribution =

"Common sense" would (automatically) tell you that if a fellow Dallas police officer were killed they would leave no stone unturned to find out the murderer!

Belin then made the claim that the "missed shot" missed everything. In this he was referring to the HSCA studies at the time. I made another humorous footnote in my notebook that if this were true that bullet became the first recorded instance of a bullet that was the first intercontinental (magic?) bullet to have circled the earth without returning. I then realized that my "space shuttle" belief was defying the law of gravity and specifically the "escape velocity" for objects required to escape earth's gravity. But I think my remarks would've fallen flat in front of Belin's feet if I had approached him.

Belin then brought up the National Research Council study of the HSCA's acoustics which "proved" the HSCA was wrong.

Belin then took on "Hollywood" (probably keeping Stone's "JFK" + "Nixon" films in mind). He said Hollywood is committing "violence against the truth". He called it an "electronic downpour of lies". And nothing he said can withstand that.

Belin then pulled out his "trump card" and called on the ARRB to release all files regardless in full.

Belin criticized & attacked the JFK assassination buffs. He termed them "the assassination revisionists—the JFK crowd!". It is they, he charged, who cover up the truth about the JFK assassination.

As a last point Belin attacked those "profit-seeking corporations" (whose interest in the JFK case was solely money. Although not mentioned who these were it was clear he meant the media—especially film, television and books. (This is the real conspiracy in Belin's mind. Naturally, no lawyers, like Belin, do not engage in any way in joining this phenomenon).

After all this was over, Belin discussed his "fight" to obtain the original Z-film. He cited a letter he wrote to a chief executive officer for "Time".

Another thing mentioned by Belin (& previously cited by Fiebler when Cockburn "interviewed" him) that it was the Kennedy family's "reluctance" to release the autopsy photographs. All this sailed right over the heads of each A&B member with no questions asked if this indeed were fact which, as you've so clearly shown, was not!

-15-

Belin also stated as fact that "every document in the Tappit murder has been released". No one on the AEEB questioned that either. (Actually, isn't this a "hearing" and when you're "hearing" something aren't you just listening?!).

As a final plea to the AEEB, Belin again urged the Board to release all documents in full. He said if they didn't do this they would suffer the consequences for not getting this done.

As a very brief footnote to Belin's testimony I was curious as to his expression in condemning researchers as "the JFK crowd" so I looked up a letter by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. to the Wall Street Journal of 3/1/96. (I've sent you a copy). The letter criticized a Belin editorial of 2/13/96 on "History According to Hollywood". Schlesinger called attention to the fact that Belin heading the Rockefeller Commission allowed the CIA to lie to him. At the very end of the letter by Schlesinger he said that he found he did not "inspire confidence in Mr. Belin's talent for accuracy."

Since Schlesinger was part of that "Kennedy crowd" it appeared to me there is some basic antagonism between the K family & Belin (with

-16-

Schlesinger's comments representing one of the more overt forms of this antagonism). Perhaps Belin was never included as part of the K-family "incrowd" for whatever reasons. Despite the fact that Belin was appointed to the Warren Commission it seems clear to me, at least, he certainly didn't represent the Kennedys' interests. Perhaps Belin feels miffed at this. It might help explain why Belin is now trying to "justify" his "historic" role in the Commission. The Kennedy crowd undoubtedly will have nothing to do with him. One of your previous letters asserted that his desire to appear before the ARRB is precisely because he is there to defend his interest and only his.

The fact that both Libeler & Belin apparently colluded on what they would say only adds to this. If collusion is not a stam, it certainly is the game!

Tim DiEugenio also "thanked" the ARRB for its past performance. But I was embarrassed by at least one piece of evidence that a certain JFK buff introduced at CPA previously that Oswald's W-2 forms were "faked". The "buff" is JOHN ARMSTRONG so be very wary if you come across

any of his "evidence". For example, Armstrong tried to "prove" at COPA in 1994 that there were two Oswalds going back as far as his grammar school days! His "documents" show, he said, he went to two different schools in different states at the same time! You'd be amazed at the rather enthusiastic reception he received from the audience after he spoke on this! (Or maybe you wouldn't be surprised!).

Among other things D. Eugeniev claimed before the ARRB was that James Angleton "seems to be running Lee Harvey Oswald" (obviously, then, as part of CIA).

D. Eugeniev's praise of the ARRB at the very end of his testimony was probably even more ludicrous than Lifton's. D. Eugeniev said the ARRB occupied "the moral high ground" but they could "lose it" (if they didn't watch their step).

Lifton who was next to the last to testify praised the ARRB for its past work in getting documents released. He then urged the ARRB to insist that the Zapruder family donate the original 2 film to the National Archives. As a final gesture Lifton put on the table what he said was an excellent

18

copy of the Z-film. At this precise moment about 4 television cameras (geared in on this copy of the Z-film). A grand moment in TV history! (There was no mention whatsoever in the L.A. Times article on the Hearings). It is possible that the L.A. TV programs that night highlighted this but I have no information on that).

Steve Tilley who was the last to testify (he's with the National Archives) mentioned that "a couple million documents" have now been released. Naturally, no over-all evaluation of what this total represents or means was presented.

The above is as best as I can recall & all I can say is that despite nothing of substance being revealed (not that I thought there ever would be) I still think my presence there was important. It adds to the historical record from at least my point of view.

I do intend to write an article on this for the British publication (& any comments you may have to offer would be appreciated).

Write when you get the chance.

Best,
Hal Verbr