

New address: Rt. 7, Frederick, Md. 21701

12/28/67

Dear Mr. Cook,

Thanks for your thoughtful letter of 12/18, which has been forwarded.

I do not have a copy of the Itak analysis. I should get one but haven't taken the time for I regard it and that approach as suspect. There are too many things upon which they base conclusions that they cannot be certain of. And I never did think there was anyone on the car, if that is what the object is.

However, I have other reasons for believing, as you do, that the more likely source of a shot was in the Arthur corner, particularly at frame 313. There is a perfect hideaway there that the Commission ignored. I have pictures of it.

I had not thought that JFK's ending of plots against Castro figured in this. You are right, it could have been the last straw.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

Ann Arbor, Michigan
December 18, 1967

Harold Weisberg
Hyattstown, Md.

Dear Mr. Weisberg:

I have just finished reading Oswald in New Orleans and must compliment you on again providing me with another in a long series of what must be the least enjoyable books I have ever felt obligated to read. Just as was the case with Whitewash, Whitewash II, and books by Lane, Epstein, Buchanan, Fox, Thompson (Josiah not George), Meagher, etc. I find it quite depressing, occasionally open to dissent, not always completely self-consistent, but nevertheless, necessary.

I have gradually accumulated an admittedly incomplete library (largely paperbacks and sundry magazine articles) which as a spare time hobby I attempt to keep indexed and in some semblance of order. I must also admit that my weakest point is in wading through the twenty-six volumes; due entirely to their cost and otherwise limited availability in this area. At this stage I have managed to wade through only six of them, hour at a time, sitting in the University of Michigan library, where they are available on a noncirculating basis only.

At one time I generated enough gall to write my congressional representatives (Esch and Ford) explaining my student status and not too abnormal cash-crisis, but they were apparently unable to be of any assistance. If you know of any philanthropic individual who is more interested in making them available than is Mr. Ford I would appreciate the assistance.

While on the subject of Mr. Ford: On page 30 of the Canyon edition of Oswald you refer to the Commission's "First Shock" and to Mr. Rankin's "dirty-rumor" comments in reference to it. A far more enlightening quote (attributed to the Chief Justice) very aptly illustrates my attitude to much of the Commission's effort. On the next page (page 26 in the Ballentine edition of Portrait of the Assassin) Mr. Ford quotes Mr. Warren as saying that Mr. Rankin felt that the Commission should go to Mr. Hoover and:

"...ask him, first, IF IT IS TRUE, and secondly if he can supply us with information to establish that these facts ARE NOT TRUE..." (emphasis mine).

I have had considerable difficulty explaining the unique "Commission-rationale" to various skeptics with whom I argue endlessly but am somewhat suprised that you have not used this gem yet. I shall expect to see it in Whitewash III.

Another bit of wisdom (\$) which I pass along for whatever it may be worth to you concerns the Nix Film Analysis published by Itek Corp., Lexington, Mass. (Zip 02173), dated 18 May, 1967. While I do not propose to acquaint you with anything new, I do not recall you ever mentioning it.

In essence the Itek analysis seems to have negated the so-called "figure with a rifle" allegedly seen by others in examining the Nix film. While Itek's measurements correspond nicely with the distance to the parking lot behind the fence on the "knoll", they conclude that elevations are such as to preclude a shot from that particular spot. Although I at first rejected the idea that this figure was composed of shadows on the wall of Shelter 3, I now agree that at least a portion of "him" was so-caused. Regardless of the source of the rest of "him", "he" appears to be harmless. It is quite likely composed of a combination of shadows and sky highlights showing through the trees.

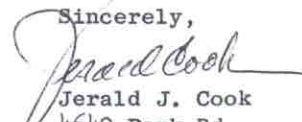
However, viewed as any meaningful contribution to the question of possible shots from the "grassy knoll" the entire analysis is, to me, trivial. No assassin could have sensibly chosen this particular spot anyway (the opening into the parking lot discussed by Itek). A much more suitable spot seems to be the southernmost section of the fence, at the corner or any of several places along this section of fence extending toward the triple underpass. I found the location designated by Itek as "313" to be completely visible from this area from fence height (5 to 5 1/2 feet), and further to be completely unobstructed by the concrete wall on the knoll.

A more significant contribution of the Itek analysis is to the timing of the sequence of shots. It has proven, if nothing else, that any timing of the assassination based upon film speed is highly suspect. As you are well aware, the Zapruder film yielded what eventually became the official speed of the motorcade and therefore the elapsed time for all shots (11.3 mph. and 5.6 sec., respectively). The Nix film however led Itek to conclude a motorcade speed of only 8.7 mph. which in turn allows 7.2 sec. rather than 5.6,, a not inconsiderable change. I note these facts, not to support the Commission's theory that Oswald acted alone, but because they exist...if we ignore facts which tend to support their argument on that ground alone we become exactly what we feel they have been ... prejudiced and selective. In my mind even the longer time would have been insufficient for that many well aimed shots.

One final note concerning a possible abortive attempt to assassinate Castro; have you considered the possibility that Kennedy himself (or an agency which was, or could have been interpreted to be, acting under his direct orders) stopped that attempt, including perhaps even preventing Oswald's entry into Cuba? This would certainly be in line with the "hands-off" policy and the raid on the training camp, etc., as well as provide a very real, immediate reason for redirecting the violence toward Kennedy. Such a new frustration might have been the "last straw" so to speak. Of course all this is only conjecture.

Keep up your effort,

Sincerely,


Jerald J. Cook
4640 Park Rd.
Ann Arbor, Michigan