

Dear Jim,

4/3/84

"The Case of ~~the~~ the Murdered President," by "distinguished historian Edmund Aubrey," while a novel, claims to be based on Aubrey's personal investigations in Dallas and New Orleans, on the WC's 26 volumes and his own studies in the Archives. The gimmick of having the investigation made by Sherlock Holmes may be attractive, but the claims made are refuted by the internal evidence.

For whatever historical value this may later have, I've annotated it a bit. The farther I got into it the more I skipped because it is really junk.

I find it appropriate to indulge in Holmsian deductions, of which I give you a couple. Watson's account has him and Holmes flying to Dallas from Washington and at the airport descending from the plane to the "tarmac." This could be a conclusion but is not a personal observation. It might be concluded from the pictures of AF1 at Love Field in Dallas, but it was parked away from the terminal. At old Love and at the field they'd have used which replaced it passengers did not go onto the tarmac but entered and left the planes directly from the terminal buildings. Deduction: Aubrey = bullshit. New Orleans example: they examined the 544 Camp building in person long after the end of HSCA's life and publication of its volumes. Long before then that and nearby buildings had been demolished for the construction of new federal buildings on that land. Deduction, Aubrey = bullshit.

He may have or had access to the 26, but I recall no reference to those volumes that could not have been picked up from the various books and there are not that many precise citations. At least one is impossible, so, deduction: Aubrey misunderstood what he read and attributed to the cited volume of the 26.

He rather openly plagiarizes one of the most obviously irrational representations of Hugh McDonald, that Oswald was under the impression that he was firing for the Secret Service to scare JFK into heeding its cautions.

And bearing on Aubrey's knowledge of DC, he has Holmes flying eastward into the unmet of his life from an Air Force base in nearby Virginia. Where there is no such base capable of handling a duplicate of AF1.

The publishing history is interesting. Perhaps provocative would be a better word. "First published 1980 as Sherlock Holmes in Dallas, by Dodd, Mead and Company." Copyright is 1980. Then it is republished as "History" by Congdon & Weed, NYC, simultaneously in Canada by Methuen Publications, in 1983, with distribution by St. Martin's Press in U.S., where it was a \$9 paperback. I doubt there was enough sale in hardback in 1980 to justify any reprinting, and I doubt even more than any publishers would consider a \$9 reprint of a virtually unknown novel as a wise investment. So, as I wonder about the book itself, with nothing going on in 1983 to create any special interest, I also wonder about the possibility of special interest behind 1983 reprinting here and in Canada.

Harold