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JOHN G. CHRISTIAN

RICHARD M. WARTES

March 25, 1967

Harold Weisberg  
Hyattstown, Maryland

Dear Mr. Weisberg:

Some intermediate thoughts on the Clay Bertrand (nee Shaw) association with the New Orleans Trade Mart/Dallas Trade Mart possibility --

A preliminary probe indicates that the Dallas Citizens' Council hierarchy and the Trade Mart cartel are virtually one in the same. The eight (8) principals amongst the 175 within the Council are the essential core of Southwestern politics/economics, from which the Mart draws its power and direction. As you no doubt know, the Council hosted the Kennedy luncheon engagement that never came off, was probably instrumental in defining/directing the accoutrement arrangements, such as the guest list to the actual parade route (if only for purposes of timetable planning.)

Outside of the coincidental (?) nature of the two Trade Marts and Clay Shaw's immediate role therein, I have no clinical details of his professional/social/political/economic affinities with any of the Dallas clan, although it would seem most unusual if he didn't.

Assuming he might have, however,.....(and this could be borne out in deeper examination).....I shall put forth a hypothesis for your contemplation:

If "Dallas" wanted Kennedy removed through assassination, they most certainly wouldn't conceive of any plan by which they could be traced per se. Forgetting the background and overtures, let's say that Clay Shaw broached his "colleagues" in Dallas on a plan whereby he, through his veiled and nom deplume activities, had developed considerable influence with an unstable, erratic element of sub rosa and exhibitionist kooks in and around New Orleans. Properly played, these persons could be cultivated on pseudo ideological grounds to knock off

the President in an ambush. Furthermore, the plethora of such characters would make it possible to develop several groups of such "assassination teams" wholly independent of one another, both logistically and politically. These same teams, staked out throughout Kennedy's projected itinerary, including the Texas excursion, would eventually be presented with an opportunity to commit the crime of the century. (Another set: Hall, Seymour?)

Oswald (or a plant) served as the leftist distraction and the current batch of kooks in the Garrison affair brought up the rightist reactionary element; it now appears that several of the current crop in New Orleans are from still another group or team, thus the capacity to tie-in the whole schmeer becomes an impossible task.

In the event any one of these less-than-sophisticated got caught in this broadly applied plot, the sole source of their direction would lead back to one Clay Bertrand, who nobody knows anything about, at least in theory. And when the ensuing investigation starts turning up witnesses, they come up with such diverse or conflicting statements and timetables that coherency is impossible.....and credibility immediately wanes. As you said, however, the most positive element of Garrison's entire pursuit is that he has been able to get indictments, whatever the substance of his investigation.

In effect, then, I suggest that the element of confusion was the premeditated hallmark of the plot, so that no court in the land would convict the culprits as having conspired with the likes of the aforementioned big boys. In this occasion, Oswald was meant to be caught, for his involvement with the FBI and CIA (which could have been easily exacted from Dallas FBI sources) made followthrough prosecution an impossibility for those really responsible ultimately.

With evidence so well planted against Oswald, the FBI had to stand back and let the Dallas cops pin the rap on this most obvious of suspects. But the killing of Oswald by Ruby presents a wholly removed concept, one which I see as impromptu at best.

Whether Ruby and Oswald had prior knowledge of one another is important, but not vital here. For whatever the motivation, Ruby was induced quickly and succinctly to remove Oswald at all costs. The hypnosis theory would seem most applicable here. But under whose direction and supervision? It is here that some element of the Dallas clan might have shown his hand, either directly..... or under the clandestine aegis of the Dallas cops, Curry being the prime suspect. (Remember the phone hangup? Was he actually on the phone planning or being directed?)

Ruby, like Tippit, presents a peripheral distraction, although their possible involvement does make sense in a context that they, too, were just another "team" being cast forth to confuse any investigation process. Oswald's amenability to being someone important made him ideal fodder for the FBI et al in the case that they might have been snooping around after Ruby for his clumsy activities surrounding possible arms and body exchanges with Cubans. Theoretically, this gets the crux back to New Orleans, eh?

All the aforementioned is based on no particular expertise, since my delving into the case is as yet limited. Your works have been the anchor, however, and from this material has come the foundation of my intuitive perspective. I offer same to one whose fountainhead of clinical knowledge of the particulars might apply it with a more sensitive touch.

I have commenced a dialogue with Harv Morgan aimed at putting together the kind of Pro Forma I am expecting out of me. It should be ready for your perusal within a three week period. Perhaps I should make note at this juncture that I envision a commercially viable, but academically tempered, vehicle to attract the broadest possible support in every direction. The primary goal of such an undertaking as I will propose will be to entice/enlist a co-operative group within the mass media, meaning radio, TV, recording and motion picture interests, to take the initiative in providing an objective platform for those responsible for the recently evolving criticism of the Warren Commission's conclusions. Both sides will be (publicly) invited to air their contentions in an open forum of give and take.

Continued good luck and access in your extraordinary calling.

Sincerely yours,

JOHN G. CHRISTIAN

JGC/bm

cc: Harv Morgan