

RAMSEY CLARK TRANSCRIPT  
11/30/70

INTERVIEW WITH ART KEVIN

IN THE COURSE OF THE BRIEF INTERVIEW, KEVIN FIRST ASKED MR. CLARK TO COMMENT ON ALLEGATIONS THAT FBI CHIEF HOOVER WIELDS A STRONG STICK OVER ALL OF OFFICIAL WASHINGTON BECAUSE OF ROMPED THICK DOSSIERS HE HAS ON KEY PEOPLE:

CLARK

WELL, I DON'T BELIEVE HE EXERTS THAT KIND OF POWER..I DON'T SEE PEOPLE AFRAID OF HIM...CERTAINLY I'M NOT. I DON'T SEE WHY OTHERS WOULD BE. HE HAS A LOT OF INFORMATION...HE HAS TO HAVE A LOT OF INFORMATION DOESN'T HE? THAT'S HIS BUSINESS..HE'S AN INVESTIGATOR. A LOT OF THE INFORMATION IS STORED..PERHAPS THERE'S SOME THAT NEEDN'T BE STORED AND WE PROBABLY NEED SOME PUBLIC METHOD OF PURGING FILES AND REPOSITORIES LIKE THAT. A SOCIETY THAT WANTS TO BE FREE CAN NOT PERMIT THE ACCUMULATION NEEDLESLY OF INFORMATION THAT DOESN'T RELATE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT OR CRIMINAL CONDUCT..AND WE HAVE TO CONSTANTLY BE AWARE OF THE PERILS OF LETTING THAT HAPPEN. I HAVEN'T SEEN WITHIN MY EXPERIENCE ANY WRONGFUL USE OF SUCH INFORMATION BY THE FBI...THERE HAVE BEEN QUESTIONS IN MY MIND, VERY SERIOUS QUESTIONS AS TO WETHER THERE HAD BEEN SUCH USE, BUT I HAVEN'T EVIDENCE OF IT. AS A LAWYER WITH SOME SENSE OF DISCIPLINE ABOUT THOSE THINGS, I HAVE TO GO ON THE EVIDENCE..NOT ON SUSPICION.

KEVIN

WOULD YOU SAY THE SAME THING WOULD HOLD TRUE, FOR EXAMPLE, FOR THE INFORMATION THAT IS NOW IN THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES REGARDING THE DEATH OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY? I RECALL DURING THE GARRISON-SHAW INVESTIGATION THAT THERE WAS CERTAIN INFORMATION THAT I BELIEVE YOU DID NOT WANT TO SENT TO NEW ORLEANS?

CLARK

MR. GARRISON ENDEAVORED TO SUBPEONA THE AUTOPSY PHOTOS AND X-RAYS OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY FOR USE IN THAT TRIAL. THEY COULD HAVE HAD NO POSSIBLE RELEVANCE IN THE TRIAL. HE NEVER CLAIMED THAT THE DEFENDANT CLAY SHAW WAS EVEN IN DALLAS AND WHAT...EH...Y'KNOW, THESE ARE NOT PRETTY THINGS... I DON'T KNOW IF YOU'VE EVER SEEN X-RAYS OR AUTOPSY PHOTOS OF A PERSON ASSASSINATED THAT WAY. BUT IT'S HARDLY THE WAY THAT AMERICA WANTS TO

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REMEMBER PRESIDENT KENNEDY AND TO LET THEM BE USED CHEAPLY WOULD BE AN ACT OF COWARDICE AND I WASN'T ABOUT TO DO IT. I THINK THE FAMILIES ENTITLED TO MORE THAN THAT AND THE AMERICAN PUBLIC IS ENTITLED TO MORE THAN THAT. THEY'VE BEEN EXAMINED BY THE FOREMOST PATHOLOGISTS AND NEUROLOGISTS IN THE UNITED STATES AND THOSE MEN HAVE GIVEN SWORN STATEMENTS THAT THEY SUPPORT THE FINDINGS OF THE WARREN COMMISSION. I THINK THAT'S ADEQUATE.

KEVIN

WOULD YOU FAVOR ANY OF THAT INFORMATION IN THE ARCHIVES THOUGH BEING RELEASED BEFORE 2039, AS THE ORDER DECREES?

CLARK

WELL, THE X-RAYS AND AUTOPSY PHOTOS WILL BE AVAILABLE...LET'S SEE... IN ABOUT 2 YEARS I GUESS...I'VE FORGOTTEN THE PERIOD OF TIME REALLY... IT'S FIVE YEARS FROM 1966. IT'D BE IN SEPTEMBER OF 1971...FOR SCIENTIFIC STUDY BUT NOT FOR PUTTIN' ON PAGES OF A MAGAZINE OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT. IF WE DON'T HAVE ANY MORE RESPECT FOR HUMAN DIGNITY THAN THAT, WHY GOD HELP US. THE OTHER TWO TYPES OF INFORMATION THAT ARE IN THE ARCHIVES... I HAVEN'T PERSONALLY REVIEWED...BUT THEY RELATE TO TWO SITUATIONS. ONE: PEOPLE WHOSE LIVES MIGHT BE JEOPARDIZED BECAUSE THEY LIVE IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES AND THEY SAID THINGS ABOUT CONDUCT THERE THAT THE COUNTRIES IN WHICH THEY LIVE WOULDN'T FAVOR. IT HAS NO RELEVANCE HOWEVER TO WHAT HAPPENED IN DALLAS ON NOVEMBER 22'ND, 1963. I THINK THAT'S WHAT THE PEOPLE WHO REVIEWED THE MATERIAL SAY. YOU DON'T GO AROUND NEEDLESSLY JEOPARDIZING HUMAN LIFE LIKE THAT. THE OTHER IS INFORMATION ABOUT INDIVIDUALS WHO LIVED IN NEW ORLEANS AND OTHER PLACES THAT MAY BE DEREGOTARY OF THEIR CHARACTER. THEIR PERSONAL MORAL STANDARDS AND CONDUCT. AND IT'S ALWAYS BEEN A PRINCIPLE OF OUR COUNTRY THAT INVESTIGATORS DON'T RELEASE INFORMATION THAT'S HARMFUL TO INDIVIDUALS THAT ISN'T ANY EVIDENCE OF A CRIME. I THINK WE'VE GOT AN OBLIGATION TO STICK BY OUR PRINCIPLES. IT HAS NO RELATIONSHIP TO THE ASSASSINATION.

KEVIN

YOU ARE CERTAIN AS A FORMER ATTORNEY-GENERAL THAT THERE WAS NOTHING OTHER THAN WHAT THE COMMISSION REPORTED TO BE THE CASE?

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CLARK

WELL, I'M NEVER CERTAIN...I'M A SKEPTIC. I THINK WE HAVE TO KEEP AN OPEN MIND ON ALL OF THESE THINGS. AND I THINK WE HAVE TO EXHAUST EVERY LEAD...RUN DOWN EVERY LITTLE BIT OF INFORMATION. BUT I ALSO HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO BE REALISTIC AND IN MY JUDGEMENT THE WARREN COMMISSION MADE THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE AND EXHAUSTIVE STUDY OF A SET OF FACTS THAT'S EVER BEEN UNDERTAKEN BY MAN. AND THE EVIDENCE THAT THEY HAVE THAT SHOWS THAT LEE HARVEY OSWALD AND HE ALONE ASSASSINATED PRESIDENT KENNEDY EXCEEDS THAT OF NEARLY ANY MURDER TRIAL CONDUCTED IN THE UNITED STATES.