

Dear Bill,

3/30/94

Thanks for your 3/25 Cooper recap and the clippings. Some of those cartoons are great! And the questions you highlighted in the Mexico assassination story are the usual, obvious ones that may be more politically complicated down there unless a random act. It will take some time, if the full truth ever emerges. We contribute a little to the same Indian school of your stickon pad.

I did not think what I said Russell said to me through but I also do not recall his ever formulating his beliefs as you attribute to the documentary maker.

As best I recall Russell believed that Oswald as the only shooter and at the same time that the single-bullet theory was impossible. He also believed that "they" never told the Commission the full Oswald story. Obviously true with the FBI only recently turning over some 50,000 pages for disclosure the the CIA having done something similar last year. If there was more to be told about Oswald in his belief, that can indicate he believed there was a left conspiracy. I'll have to reread the Cooper oral history. (When I wrote you I was under the impression that there was a second Cooper oral history.)

I do recall the resignation letter. Recently I did hear from Selby. He then told me that in response to that unsent letter Rankin assigned Alfreda Scobey to Russell, or hired her to work on Commission work for Russell. I told him that sounded like LBJ's solution.

Muzzle suppressors are new to me. How old are they? Just curious. Nobody ever talks about silencing the shots, an obvious possibility

Thank for cuing the tape on Newman. I'm deep into writing again and expect Dave Keck, who I think you do not know, today. From Lesar I hear that Newman is deep into those newly-disclosed records. Newman phoned me a month or so ago to apologize for his long silence and to say he'd be up in about two weeks. Not a word since. Lesar also said he thinks those newly-disclosed records may be largely what I have, reprocessed. He'll try to find out.

If we refer to your letter again, I'm going to file it with the Cooper file in the basement files.

Can you imagine what Cooper might have added to that "absolute negligence" comment about the FBI if he'd known about that Oswald note?

Marina was under pressure, from the FBI. I have the documents on that now. They had a special INS official flown in to threaten her with deportation.

Back to work,

Harold

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March 25, 1994

Dear Harold:

I received a large package from you yesterday. Thanks.

I enclose a letter from Harry Merritt. He is writing the biography of John Sherman Cooper. I had already given him a copy of Whitewash, so now I have sent him a copy of Whitewash II and the Katzenbach memo to Bill Moyers.

I will cue up the tape to John Newman. It shows him pulling orange HSCA classified replacement sheets from Oswald's 201 file. Lets face it, there is nothing about Oswald that should be classified at this point, but there is.

Don't forget, in the confidential file Chip Selby gave you about Sen. Russell, there is an interview with Russell where he states that although he believed Oswald was involved, he believed JFK was killed as a result of a conspiracy. So perhaps the documentary maker has seen this interview. I believe that is the file where Russell wrote but apparently never sent to LBJ a letter of resignation from the Warren Commission, and complained that he was not informed when the Commission met, and read about some of the upcoming meetings in the newspaper!

There is nothing in the UK oral history of Sen. Cooper about the single bullet theory. The only thing I have found of Cooper's that discussed the single bullet theory is the 1978 letter when he was at Covington and Burling, where he states he and Russell disagreed with the single bullet theory. That is why I could never understand the "common knowledge" that Sen. Cooper disagreed with the theory. Until Bill Cooper, the UK archivist, sent me that letter, I was not aware of any direct evidence that he disagreed with it. That is why I was so excited when we found it, because I had been looking for it for 2 years.

When he did the oral history, Bill Cooper, the interviewer, probably was not knowledgable enough to ask Cooper about the single bullet theory. As I have told you before, Sen. Cooper was surprisingly reluctant to discuss either the Warren Report or the Cooper-Church

Amendment to end the Vietnam War. In my opinion, which I believe is shared by Bill Cooper, the Senator was a diplomatic gentleman, was actually Ambassador to India at one time. He did not like conflict, LBJ drafted him to be on the Warren Commission. My research shows 5 areas that Cooper was concerned with in the Warren Report.

1. Leaks. Members of his staff, especially Bailey Guard, have told me that he was fanatic about doing his Warren Com. work alone with the help of one secretary. He would not let the staff peak a look at what was on his desk. He shoed them away. He vowed if there were leaks, they would not be from him. Bailey Guard told me Cooper worked 20plus hours a week on the Report. Of course, we now know most leaks were from the FBI and Hoover.

2. Single bullet theory. I have read many books where Cooper is stated to disagree with the single bullet theory, but the 1978 letter is the only evidence I have seen of his disagreement.

3. Marina Oswald testimony. He and Russell caught inconsistencies in her testimony, as you know, flew to Dallas in September 64 to interview her again. I believe he knew she was under pressure to say anything bad possible against Oswald, and in the oral history he talks about she got a public relations person to doll her up. He seemed to believe she was just a bit player in history, but probably always wondered about her contradictions.

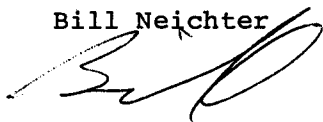
4. FBI conduct. In regards to Oswald, stated in his oral history the FBI conduct was "absolute negligence". I believe he was referring to the fact that the FBI had known Oswald was in town, but did not keep him under watch. Perhaps he suspected there was more to the FBI-Oswald relationship, which many now suspect was that Oswald was some type of informer for the FBI. Since as you know, the FBI was sort of stuck with the "Oswald did it alone theory", it looked better to them to be seen as negligent in not watching Oswald, than to admit he was doing informant work for them. In my opinion, this is one thing that will someday be proven, but most people will not know its significance, which is that it indicates that Oswald did not have anything to do with killing the President.

5. False Oswalds. In a 1978 letter, he handwrote a note about the "Odio women". This is one of the most credible of the cases where someone apparently pretended to be Lee Harvey Oswald. So 15 years after the Warren Report, Sen. Cooper still remembered their saying they had been visited by a man who was a dead ringer for Oswald, and as you know, one of the visitors called back and later said that was Leon Oswald, who was crazy and might do anything.

These are the areas I believe that Sen. Cooper was concerned about, and that he could never reconcile in his own mind.

I hope spring is coming as fast there as it is here. Say Hi to Lil, and I'll write you soon and send you the video I borrowed.

Bill Neichter



PS As to whether the rifles used to shoot JFK were using silencers or muzzle suppressors, I have always felt that they probably were. This could explain why the first shot sounded odd. Also, in the NOVA documentary, there is a still photo that appears to show a rifle being held by the grassy knoll gunman, which appears to have a muzzle suppressor. An interesting photo, to say the least. I was amazed recently to receive a gun catalog that sold muzzle suppressors, so they are easier to come by than silencers, do much the same and are legal.