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Dear George,

Up what has become my usual too early, for which and for other reasons I see a neurologist with a speciality in sleep disorders on my third! medical appointment of the day, I drafted a letter to Gates and then was lucky enough for the local paper to come just as I went out to mail the books and pick the Post up. I'm pretty sure I'll be able to copy the story on Howard Donahue's coming book on the JFK assassination and to mail that and this this afternoon. What I am not sure of is that I'll be able to read and correct and write you about my letter to Gates. If I am able to read and correct it and do not have time to write you about it, please regard it as confidential for the time being. I'll then write you later about it. If it is not enclosed you'll get it when I can write you a bit about it.

The AP story on Donahue's book may have been routed to you and you may or may not have kept it if it was. In short, his theory is impossible and I told him this more than once, at least once in some detail when he and his wife were here. The first time was when the Sunday Sun, also without checking, published it years ago. - have that and my letter, I'm sure.

Like all the others who pretend to solve the assassination with theories they dream up, Donahue ignores what disproves his, the existing photographic evidence, among other things.

Unless St. Martin's is running a calculated risk, publishing this book without the necessary checking is wildly crazy. As is Donahue because of what I wrote and told him, that his theory is proven to be impossible by the existing evidence to which I referred him.

I'd thought that the last time I'd persuaded him because he has been silent about it for so long.

It is true that on one occasion he did ~~fire~~ fire a different Mannlicher-Carcano three times within ~~76~~ 5.6 seconds. It is not true that he then duplicated the shooting attributed to Oswald. If I can find them I have the results of that test for CBS News. Bob Richter leaked them to Sylvia Meagher, who gave me a copy.

I'm not taking the time this early morning when I'm about to leave for my walking therapy to check my files to get the name of the Secret Service agent he says fired the ~~BAR~~ BAR but without being a lawyer I think that man has a case and might sue. Not only cannot it be proven that this happened, leave alone was possible, common sense alone says that in less than 5.6 second he could have gotten that BAR up from the floor of the followup car and then fired it -without being seen by the many onlookers. It was

some time later that he had that weapon up, with no indication of ever using it. It is my recollection that ~~he~~ this was about the time the motorcade disappeared beneath the Triple Underpass.

And, of course, nobody heard that alleged shot or saw it being aimed.

I want to keep it confidential at least for now but I've had several recent phone calls from a retired Secret Service agent who was then on the White House detail. He has not been able to come here because of illness but he is well now and he is writing me about what I cannot confirm and believe is unlikely if not impossible, that they knew about Oswald before the assassination. I think one of his details is impossible or close to it, that they had that backyard picture of Oswald on the bulletin board before the assassination. Then it disappeared, he says, and others denied to him that they's seen it.

One former White House detail agent, perhaps not assigned there but I believe he was, Fox, now dead, did leak the black-and-white autopsy pictures.

When he first showed them to the man to whom he leaked them he had in the same folder a photocopy of a picture of Hitler's will!

It appears that Stone has opened publishing floodgates.

If you can send me a copy of the former counsels' statement before you can go over your notes I'd appreciate it because when I have time I'm writing about that.

In a 1/5/92 article in the Inquirer Specter said that people should read the Warren report to "accept the extensive factual analysis and sound conclusions" in it.

I liked that invitation. I'm accepting it.

Best,

George, I've time for a hasty explanation of my letter to Gates and some of the ellipsis in it. At least for now this is for your information only. My purposes do not include publicity. While I have no reason to believe that the CIA is any more intent on openness under Gates than in the past, I also believe that I owe it a reasonable opportunity to think about it and respond.

At the beginning of Watergate a German publisher asked me to do a book, which I started to do, changed his mind, then a second publisher did the same thing, asked and then decided against it. Having started I continued working and I did develop information that Bernstein and Woodward did not publish if they'd learned it. This includes information on E. Howard Hunt. I think there is a prima facie case of his preventing publication I had arranged for through the man then my agent, Max Wilkinson. I found that Hunt used Wilkinson's office as his New York address. That may be the office from which he had a tie-line to his Washington office. There is more on Hunt of that period.

In those days the FBI was intercepting overseas mail for the CIA. Mine was delayed and some never reached me. What ^{did not reach me in London} was not placed in the mail is correspondence from a German publisher who accepted Whitewash. I later learned that when I did not respond to the letters that never reached me they sent the manuscript back. It never reached me.

For a period of about two months all my mail to my London agent was delayed. I have a telegram from him telling me that it then all reached him at one time.

There were at least two instances of intrusion into my being published in England, the second while the contract was being drafted. While I can't pin this on the CIA it is more suspect than any other agency. The first instance was the killing of the book to Collins, which had gone for it in 1965, by an old-time British spook, then Warden of All Souls at Oxford, John Sparrow.

The ribbon copy of Oswald in New Orleans was intercepted and delayed for some time in reaching me from my then New York agent. The post office explanation for the delay and the absence of any wrapper was ridiculous.

What called itself "the Public Affairs staff" and had no visible connection with the CIA monitored what I and others were saying about the JFK assassination. As - now recall Harold ~~de~~ Ober was in charge, he with his staff were eased out in the ~~wake~~ wake of Watergate and as I recall were taken in by NSA. I have bills rendered for the service, checks in payment, envelopes in which they were mailed, and carbon copies of what I'd said. Sure the CIA can say it wanted to know what was being said but that is domestic intelligence, then prohibited for it.

Before it was known that Praeger was a CIA publisher one of his people was quite impressed by Whitewash, forecast their first print would be 50,000 copies, then a best-seller indication, but Praeger personally rejected the book. He was out of town when I

submitted the manuscript and when it was returned to me I learned that he had done the rejecting, personally.

When there was attention to Hunt and his novels it became public that Wilkinson was both his agent and his friend.

The firm was Littauer & Wilkinson. There then was a Littauer CIA foundation. I do not know whether these are one of more Littauers or whether there is any other kind of connection but the name is not all that common.

While I have no proof I do have reason to believe that the CIA was engaged in ~~xxx~~ arranging for non-publication as well as what it has admitted, for publication. With Hunt part of it.

There is probably more. This is off the top of the head. What is solid and beyond question is that the Office of Security had at least two files on me, lied about them and withheld them. There is reason to believe that at least one related to publishing.

So, while I expect nothing in response to my letter, I want to wait and see,

Harold

Towson arms expert

TOWSON (AP) — A weapons expert claims that John F. Kennedy was killed by a Secret Service agent who was trying to return the assassin's fire, but accidentally hit the president.

Howard Donahue's theory is outlined in a book titled "Mortal Error: The Shot that Killed JFK," by Bonar Menninger, which is scheduled to be in bookstores nationwide Wednesday.

Mr. Donahue concludes that Lee Harvey Oswald shot at and hit Kennedy with a 6.5mm Mannlicher-Carcano rifle, but the fatal bullet came from a Secret Service agent in the Dallas motorcade.

The agent is named in the book.

David W. Belin, the former Warren Commission counsel who has emerged in recent years as the commission's most vocal defender, was quick to attack Mr. Donahue's thesis.

"The theory is, like all the others, just wrong. If you look at the record as a whole, it's clear that Lee Harvey Oswald shot the president, just as we concluded," he said.

The U.S. Secret Service denied that a

rifle was fired.

"If I used the word 'ridiculous,' that would be the mildest thing I could say. I haven't seen the book, but know the general thesis," said Bob Snow, a spokesman for the Secret Service.

Meanwhile, in Dallas, Larry Howard, director of the JFK Assassination Center and a firearms consultant on the film "JFK," called the idea "absolutely ridiculous." He claims the president was hit by at least three riflemen and the killing shot came from the grassy knoll.

For Mr. Donahue, 69, of Towson, the attention comes after years of obscurity.

A former World War II bomber pilot, he graduated from the University of Maryland in 1949 and for many years was a pharmaceutical salesman before pursuing his true avocation, firearms.

A dedicated hunter, he operated a Towson gun shop for 12 years. In 1981, he closed the shop and has since earned his living as a firearms examiner, investigating gun accidents and testifying in court.

He began pursuing his Kennedy investi-

thinks accidental shot killed JFK

gation in 1967 after he took part in tests with a Carcano rifle at the H.P. White Ballistics Laboratory near Bel Air.

In that testing, filmed by CBS, he fired three times and hit three head shots on a moving target in less than the 5.6 seconds, which is thought to be the minimum time Oswald could have fired. Knowing how hard it was, he doubted Oswald, a mediocre shot, could have pulled it off.

"I'm the only firearms expert who's ever investigated this," he says. "Everyone else is either a lawyer or an engineer or just an amateur."

An early version of his theory was published in 1977 in *The (Baltimore) Sun Magazine*. But he's been routinely dismissed by, among others, the House Select Assassination Committee of 1978, "60 Minutes" and Kennedy assassination experts.

Approaches to other authors and experts went nowhere, until Mr. Menninger, a reporter who now lives in Kansas City, Mo., heard of Mr. Donahue and gave him a call.

Mr. Menninger is a former reporter with the *Kansas City Business Journal* and the *Washington Business Journal*.

The Warren Commission concluded that Lee Harvey Oswald, acting alone, shot and killed Kennedy. Mr. Donahue believes that subtle ballistic evidence reveals that the head-shot bullet came from another direction. He said two tests could instantly prove or disprove his theory, but he doesn't know if they have ever been done.

"I hate the word 'cover-up,'" he said. "It sounds so sinister. But the government was between a rock and a hard place. They did not want to admit that Kennedy was shot in the head by their own man. They tried to cover it up with the Warren Commission."

Attempts by Mr. Donahue, Mr. Menninger and the book's publisher, St. Martin's, to approach the Secret Service agent have been rebuffed with silence or threats of lawsuits.

"We went over this with our lawyers and their consensus is that he won't sue, because we did everything we could to reach him. We never arrived at our conclusion through malice. It was a deduction on our part. We don't accuse him of being an assassin. He was caught in an unfortunate web of fate through no fault of his own," Mr. Donahue said.

Mr. Donahue said the entry and exit wounds on the body support his thesis. He also said that several street-level witnesses smelled gunpowder immediately after the shooting, a highly unlikely consequence to a rifle fired five floors up from the Texas Book Depository.

Mr. Donahue said testimony has placed an AR-15 assault rifle in the agent's hand about the time of the third shot. He said former Texas Gov. John Connally, who was the limousine with Kennedy and who was also shot, testified that the third shot was the loudest.