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9/23/92

Dear Roger,

The "Toon" part of your 9/19/92 memo troubles me so I have dropped what I was writing to write you in haste because we are going out soon and I can save a day by mailing this then. And believe me, there is really a "car" story to Toon, too! For which I do not now take time.

I have had no contact with Kathlee and until recently had never heard of her. But I know Harry well and on several occasions told him never to return. To what you say about him add paranoia. He is. He has a different medical name for it and it may be that both apply. In any event, I believe he can be dangerous.

He and Groden have had trouble for some time. Groden used to come here often but now thankfully it has not been for years. I think you will be well advised if you can avoid contact with either of them.

Crough, who is manager of WCHE-AM at West Chester, PA and lived near Wilmington, in New Castle, DL, is supposedly working on his own book. Harry told me he is working with someone in New York on a documentary. He phoned me some weeks ago to ask what he should study in the E film because he was going to the archives soon to examine it. I told him particularly the nine slides that were to have been published and were not because they show that JFK, as he turns to his left, exposes the back of his head to the camera, and it is intact, with no trace of blood, along with the back of his shirt ^{about} the jacket and the jacket and neither shows any trace of blood - after 313. He phoned me a couple of weeks ago to thank me because he had done that and more than I suggested and had changed his mind. Now he agrees that the autopsy description is correct. I've not heard from him since.

He has had a feud with Lifton for years. and he was decorated by the Baltimore police for saving a life at the risk of his own.

He did not tell me he is working on a new book and he did say he is working on a documentary. He never mentioned any association with Howard et al.

I doubt that any former H.L.Hunt right-hand man would unburden himself to Harry. I knew Rothermel and I think he'd spend little time with a Harry. It is possible that one of those fired and sued by the Hunts might be looking ⁱⁿ for a form of vengeance, but if it connects the old man with the assassination, it is crap.

^{with} He may well suspect me and he can from time to time suspect anyone and probably has. If you remember any more detail I'd be interested. What bona fides did he ~~mention~~ question or in what sense.

He did give me a check once. I did not ask for it. Because he had taken-wasted- so enormous an amount of time I accepted it. ^{which} means I cashed it when it came by mail.

There was a time when he was here often and phoned more often. He brought someone who was working for him and who was interested in my analysis of Best Evidence and my file of what I got from the Military District of Washington, only what Lifton had asked for. He brought them back and said he was refiling them and I've not seen them since. Nobody else was interested in or ever asked to see that material. I think it is Crouch who told me that man was being blackmailed and paid by Lifton. I'd not have expected it of him. Lid and I came to like him. But I never asked ^{him} for anything and never charged him or anyone else any consulting fee.

How did he know you are interested in Dr. Karnei?

On the Sibert-O'Neill, part of your mailing, ~~while~~ I'm writing about aspects of that now, not what you go into. Although I do not remember and would appreciate a copy of the Burkley memos. I think I may have the first but I'm not now sure.

I think it is a mistake to believe or use anything Lifton got or ~~he~~ said he got from the enlisted men at the autopsy. Some have lied. Period. And after they have spoken to Lifton they can't and don't distinguish between what they remembered and what they came to believe while or because of what he said to them.

On the seeming mystery about when S and O'N left Bethesda, may I suggest a simpler explanation? They were really there to keep an eye on the other agents. If the FBI had wanted medical information it would have sent agents who understood that. I am inclined to believe the original story, that the autopsy ended about 11. The body was then turned over to the morticians. The FBI agents saw they were wasting their time, phoned and got an OK to leave and to take the specimens to the Lab, which undoubtedly was anxious to get them. The SAs were not there for any Hankypanky. But it is possible there were errors in their report, which they usually dictated.

Best
L. Hardy

Memo to File 9/19/92

Like a knife ripping through a comforting blanket of privacy, I received a call from Harrison Edward Livingstone late this evening. To the best of my knowledge, I have never met or spoken to Mr. Livingstone, and he claimed to have obtained my number from Kathlee Fitzgerald, one of his researchers. (I had asked her for some information a while ago.) I think she may have done this because I was asking her some questions about certain contentions in his book. I owe her pain. Mr. Livingstone has a speaking voice reminiscent of Saturday morning cartoons, for which reason I will henceforth refer to him as "Mr. Toon."

Mr. Toon asked me if I was familiar with his exploits. To spare him the effort of forming whole sentences, I indicated that I knew who he was. He said he was calling to track down a rumor he had heard about David Lifton's relationship with his publisher, but the questions quickly came around to why I was so interested in some of the material in his book and whether I was double-checking him.

Mr. Toon and his friend, Mark Crouch, an undoubtedly impressionable young man, viewed the Life transparencies of the Zapruder film at the Archives last week and have concluded that the film contains subliminal images (an advertisement for Coca-Cola perhaps?). While Mr. Toon is in Carmel, Calif., pursuing his investigations, Mr. Crouch is studying the matter. They are both convinced that Bob Groden has doctored his copy of the Zapruder film, and they have spoken to agents of the FBI in Washington about bringing fraud charges against Bob. They are also accusing Bob of stealing original prints of films (including Bronson and the autopsy photos) from the HSCA and replacing them with copies. Mr. Toon claims that prints of the autopsy photos that Bob showed him and a Baltimore Sun reporter had National Archives stamps on their reverse sides. Mr. Toon seems bent upon destroying Bob. As self-justification, he claims a niche in the National Police Hall of Fame that he deems worthy of protection.

He accuses Bob of selling his High Treason I manuscript to Jim Marrs when they were having difficulty finding a publisher, and alleges that Marrs plagiarized his manuscript, then sold his book to Oliver Stone for \$500,000, of which Larry Crafard apparently gets a cut. He accuses Bob of "manipulating the evidence", with the clear implication that Groden has been altering films and releasing them very selectively. He specifically accused Bob of retouching Z-413, although I believe the controversy over that frame was resolved many years ago.

Toon claims to be working very closely with Larry Howard of the Assassination Information Center, another reason to avoid any involvement with that group. He is working on a new book and claims that he has broken the case, although (as is usual for the countless others before him who have broken it) he was careful not to divulge any of the coveted details. He seems to be working with AIC on an angle involving H.L. Hunt and claims that one of Hunt's right-hand men has unburdened himself.

He claims to have an "operation" consisting of cooperative press types and lawyers, as well as researchers such as Kathlee, whom he plies with computer and photographic equipment.

He is also working on an attack against several of the critics. He asserts that he has run across people with some of the worst characters in the field of assassination research, and seems to feel that there is some concerted effort to obstruct him from solving the assassination. He asked me to check Lane's book with respect to the latter's analysis of libel law. He also asked me for the bona fides of Harold Weisberg, whom he seems to suspect. I told him that if you're wrong, Harold will tell you that you're wrong. I also said that Harold doesn't go in for speculating and theorizing, which is why Toon may find it difficult to talk to him. He claims to have given money to Harold in the past, and I hope it's because Harold has been charging him a high consulting fee, which he should. Mr. Toon also takes after Cyril Wecht. We did not go through the whole roster of his hit-list.

As with Kathlee Fitzgerald, I told this idiot nothing about what I am doing, and he was equally uncommunicative about the details of his latest project. I expressed the opinion that he ought to concentrate on the case rather than infighting with other critics. I also told him that, while I have met and spoken with Bob Groden only occasionally during the past seventeen years, I would be very saddened to learn that any of his allegations against Bob were true. Toon wants to send me what he writes about the critics so that I can review it for libel. I did not agree to act as his lawyer, nor render any legal advice to him and, as far as I'm concerned, I have no professional relationship with him. To paraphrase what Richter said about Lifton years ago: At this time -- and perhaps for all time -- he is not to be taken seriously.

RBF

P.S. 9/20/92 Mr. Toon calls again. Curious about what whether I'm doing anything on the case, and particularly why I would be interested in Capt. Karnei. I told him that I wasn't doing much of anything.

Memo to File 9/20/92

Peggy Robohm called this afternoon. Received my e-mail. Suggested I hold off approaching O'Neill until after his election campaign so request won't get lost in pile.

Based upon what she's telling me about her O'Neill interview, there may be serious difficulties. Robert Frazier testified that S & O arrived at the Lab with the bullet fragments at 1:45 am (5 H 73), which means they must have left Bethesda no later than approximately 1:15 or 1:20 am.. We know that the doctors were still working on the body at that time. Yet, O'Neill describes to her how the body was fixed up by the morticians, the hair was combed, and the casket was closed. How much of this is his own personal knowledge, and how much has he read or imagined he saw? Is he reacting to Lifton's thesis and exaggerating beyond his own personal knowledge? Was Frazier's testimony either mistaken or altered in the printing to make it look as though the FBI left early? Look at S & O's internal interview out of the FBI FOIA release (where they recreate Specter's interview with them, 62-109060-2637 Rosen/Belmont dated 3/12/64). They agreed the autopsy could have been over between 12 and 1 AM -- consistent with what I understood all along about their time of departure (allowing for them to phone in a brief report before going to the Lab), and with Frazier's testimony (allowing for drive time from Bethesda to the old Lab), but totally inconsistent with what he's telling Peggy now.

(at 2:45 am)
RBF

Clint Hill inspected the body after the autopsy and while the morticians were working, but the body was still naked. (Hill testimony 2 H 143; written report CE 1024 at 18 H 744-45; see also, Rowley's report of 3/19/64 (CE 1026 at 18 H 810, 815). McHugh wrote to Time Magazine that the doctors were working on him until 3 A.M., Letter to the Editor from Godfrey McHugh, Time Magazine, February 16, 1981, page 5. The morticians told Lifton they were waiting around a long time before being permitted to go to work. See Lifton's Best Evidence, Chapter 30 (John Van Hoesen quote). That jibes with Manchester. (See Manchester hardcover at 420, 427). Humes himself says they were there until 5 AM assisting the morticians in their preparations (an apparent error since the body arrived at the White House at 4:24 AM; Kellerman, Hill and contemporary news accounts agree), see 7 HSCA 256 (Humes' interview with forensic pathology sub-panel). And see the JAMA interview. Some of Lifton's and Livingstone's witnesses agree that the autopsy lasted until well after midnight. Art Smith's interview with Ebersole is in accord. How could O'Neill be under the impression that it ended at around midnight or 1 AM, report in their main report that they left immediately after it was over, arrive at FBI lab at 1:45 a.m. as Frazier testified, yet still claim to have witnessed the final combing of the hair and the closing of the casket? Were all these people attending the same autopsy? (Sylvia's decoy body giggle.) Is it that everyone else is lying to establish that Sibert & O'Neill weren't there the whole time? (Unlikely.)

This goes back to my "second look autopsy" theory that Lifton and I argued about years ago while he was writing his book and I was still puzzling things out. (I long ago realized why he was arguing with me and demanding a copy of my

written research; he was going in the direction of pre-autopsy surgery.) If O'Neill is telling the truth of his own personal knowledge, could they have taken JFK out of the casket once S & O left, and gone back to work on him? Hardly sounds plausible and there isn't a scintilla of testimony for it (unless everyone is plain lying). Did they put on a show for the FBI just to get rid of them? Wierd. Why go to all that trouble? Although this possibility cannot be completely dismissed: Why is there no mention of the Y-incision in the S & O report? No mention of removal or weighing of organs. They report that at the conclusion of the autopsy the morticians came in. Period, end of story. No further narration. Their report doesn't say that they were there when the body was taken back to the White House.

Why did Sibert and O'Neill feel it appropriate to report on Burkley's attempt to limit the autopsy in a separate investigative insert instead of their main report?

Allegation: Jackie Kennedy wanted a closed casket. How does O'Neill know this? It was the very idea that the casket might be open that Burkley used as an excuse for limiting the autopsy.

Allegation: Jackie Kennedy wanted only a limited autopsy. How does he know this? From anywhere other than Burkley's mouth? I don't believe she had the slightest idea of what was going on. All Burkley had told her (according to his own statement about their conversation on the plane, CE1126) was that they had to remove the bullet.

Nailing down the truth of this episode is infuriating.

Peggy's understanding with O'Neill was that the interview was for research purposes only unless he says otherwise. Seems there are personal things in there, including opinions about Lifton's thesis, that he might not want published. That's understandable. She wants to be able to use the research someday. I told her I would much rather approach O'Neill through her, since they seem to be comfortable with each other. I don't want to impose upon her for a copy (like Lifton mooching), but I'm going to have to at least take a look at her transcript before I try asking him any questions, so it would make sense for me to simply go up there and have her introduce me and, if possible, sit in on the questioning. Told her I want to bring docs with me to question him on. Remember, Harold wants to know whether the surgery remark was spontaneous or simply a question Humes addressed to the gallery. But it now looks as though I'm going to have to cross-examine him as though I had him on the witness stand to see what he knows and what he doesn't know, then decide if he's telling the truth or lying.

He may have been stung by the implication that he and Sibert left early and didn't see everything that they should have seen. If he didn't know what an autopsy consists of, maybe he feels a little bit foolish now. He may be reacting to Lifton's book. He may be reacting to ancient charges by the critics, Specter, and his own deceased boss that he and Sibert didn't see the whole thing. He may understand that some people would prefer it if he had seen the whole thing

(fear?). I think he's lying to Peggy. I'm almost sure of it, and she didn't have the tools at hand to press him on this point. I have to break him or catch him in an obvious lie. Because if I can't break him or catch him in a lie, it means either that he is a participant in the cover-up or else my investigative hypothesis and all the evidence supporting it are plain wrong and the early published critics were basically correct.

Peggy says Toon sold the paperback rights to HT 1 himself and unilaterally. She doesn't like him either. Says he's very egocentric. I can see that, since he went on and on about himself. In connection with a brief discussion of rivalries and backstabbing among critics, I am sending her my recent Third Decade piece.

RBF