

12/18/96

Dear Ritchie,

Please excuse my brevity. After you and Gary were here I was twice hospitalized locally for congestive heart failure and a few other unpleasant things. First time for two weeks, second time for two days they I was ambulated to the Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore where I was for three and a half weeks. So, I can't put in the hours I did and I'm still writing. Best to Gary, by the way.

I've done no work in the area you ask me about other than getting xeroxes of that magazine and the slip used for Paul Hoch.

However <sup>or</sup> to frame Oswald, which was done, it was necessary to be able to connect him with the framing materials. Seems to me.

If you pay attention to all the <sup>bits</sup> nittiness you'll be lost forever. The judgment of Newcomb/Adams is at best dubious. What they imagine was not necessary and there was no reason for an Oswald to do it had it been.

You refer to Oswald's "testimony." There is none. What we have is ~~the~~ the police version of what the police wanted <sup>to</sup> believe he said, whether or not he did say it.

That Klein's got the order I published in WW II the end of 1966.

I do not recall how much I read of the ms you left but I think not much because I do not believe it and do not believe you have or can have a case. You see what you want to see, whether or not it is there.

It also makes no sense, a fact that should be kept in mind.

Have a good holiday and a good year,

*Harold*  
Harold Weisberg

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December 13, 1996

Mr. Harold Weisberg  
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Dear Harold:

I am writing to you to ask for some help, if your able to make time. Its about the rifle.

I accept Oswalds statements that he never had one, and I've been looking into how it appeared that he did. Quite honestly, to me, the coupons by which the order(s) (both) were filled look like bullshit. But I read the testimony of Cadigan and Cole who delivered the professional opinion of authenticity to the Commission in giving their evidence. The same thing happened to the HSCA. Looking at the envelope that apparently contained the rifle coupon, parts of that testimony is persuasive when they compare it to the known samples.

Another thing that bothers me is the microfilm. In reading the story given by Mr. Waldman from Kleins, he went through a reel of micro-film both post and ante, to locate the Oswald order. To me, that means they legitimately received it, for it is hard to understand how it could have been chronologically recorded on the microfilm otherwise.

I could see some opportunity for skulduggery if it had been a loose-leaf written page, like the similar record at Seaport about the pistol. But the rifle order appears to have been filmed in sequence, paid for with a money-order that bears resemblance to Oswalds writing (more than the order itself, certainly), which writing was confirmed 3 times by expert witnesses. According to Waldmans further testimony and Kleins other records, it was duly shipped from Chicago to Dallas. According to Harry Holmes, if it made the early train, it would have been there the next day.

Holmes went on to explain that anybody appearing to be either Oswald or Hidell could have negotiated the notice card placed in the P.O. Box in order to receive the shipment. Don't you think that his candour overcame his embarrassment in admitting that proper procedure (requiring proof of identity as the authorized person to receive - as Hidell was not) may be

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given some credit? I think Holmes was a little puzzled by the fact that the Post Office could not produce any proof of receipt of either weapon. This, in the teeth of the fact that the pistol was sent C.O.D. - \$10.00 down, \$19.95 upon delivery - and no proof at all that it was Oswald who paid, or collected either weapon.

The institutional phenomena operative here is the one you before identified in the spetographic analysis case - if they had the proof that would support the story, they would have produced it. As you have said, the failure to do so has only one implication.

By the logic of that system, if there is no proof of receipt, he never received the guns. If they can be removed from the story, so goes the Tippit killing, the single bullet theory - everything connected to Oswald in the shooting. If he had no guns, he was what he said - a patsy - and that would explain a lot.

So I would like to know if anything in the record appears to banish the guns from the story. There is no proof of receipt, so where did they go?

What do you know about the postal records that would explain how proof of receipt was never adduced?

Is there anything to show that the paperwork is all false? If so, how did it get into Kleins film records, apparently in sequence?

If we say that Oswald did produce the paperwork ordering, at least, the rifle; do we say that he did so under some operational pretense, as some government agent of confused purpose? Do we have anything to support that? According to Newcomb/Adams, the Dodd Committee was investigating such mail order traffic at the time. The time is another problem - according to Kleins, the order was received in March/63, which seems way too early to postulate a plan then a - foot to frame Oswald. Yet in the absence of proof of receipt by Oswald, it seems he was framed, and so if his file was picked-up for that purpose later - there was all his pro-commie rhetoric as well - why did he apparently order the gun(s) in the first place?

Beside the lack of proof of receipt and Oswald's testimony on the point, there is the absence of any gun oil, anything that would connect him to a gun, except these records.

On the one hand there is the paperwork that appears to show that he ordered the guns, and on the other, no evidence at all that he ever received them, or cared for them if in his possession. (After the Walker shooting alleged by Oswald, they said he buried the rifle in the dirt, yet it appears in the TSBD clean and operational.)

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December 13, 1996

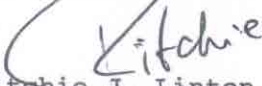
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So I get confused at this point, and wonder if you have anything to offer from the record that may clarify how it appeared that Oswald had the guns.

I don't know if you have bothered to read what Gary and I left with you, but so far, it looks like I've erred on this point. I had thought the paperwork was all false. Yet it seems Kleins actually got the order; it was paid for, and they actually sent the rifle. I would like your thoughts on what happened here, buttressed by your knowledge of the record. Your feelings about the rest of what we think I understand you intend to keep to yourself. The issue of the gun shipment, however, is a technical one based on the record, and I close by asking for some reply to that.

I thank you again for the hospitality your home provided Gary and I, and hope this finds you both in good spirits. There can be no question that I look forward to your reply.

Yours very truly,

  
Ritchie J. Linton

RJL:mmm