

John Masland
143 Curtis Ave.,
Williamsport, NJ 08094

8/17/93

Dear John,

When I read your letter of the 13th yesterday rather late in the day for me now, it having been that kind of day, I used a highlighter to mark all of the excellent points worth further discussion. But my body took over last night and I slept! I did not get around to making up the orders or to answering another letter or responding to still another as I should have. And this will be that kind of week. Hood is awarding Hil and me honorary degrees on Sunday and dear friends start arriving Thursday night. I finally got around to getting the car cleaned and washed yesterday and it took close to four hours as I went around and waiting only to be told that they do not clean the insides any more. Except that after waiting in a Jiffy Lube line almost a half hour they said they would if I got a lube job I do not need! Don't misunderstand, the costs of accumulating all the years is well worth it! But it slows down what younger people do not experience.

Your analysis is absolutely correct. I think perhaps I can make a few suggestions that may help. and had I rushed through a response last evening I would not have thought of what came to mind while I was sitting this morning waiting for the various saps to start moving a bit. My dear friend Jerry McKnight is going to do a book on the Commission's executive sessions. I do not recall a single word in them on the basic things you mention! That is where one would expect such things to be raised and worked out! So I'll give him a copy of your letter for his thinking.

From my recollection of the Commission's records other than the CIX there is some of what you may well be interested in. I recall such things as not getting around to considering most of the witnesses called in ^{beginning in} and after July until rather late, because they began with the intention and I think expectation of ~~the~~ filing their report ⁱⁿ 6/64. Without the reasoning and procedures you go into. That is because, although of course they do not articulate ^(J) especially Warren and Rankin, began with the intention of covering it all up. I do not think some, like Russell in particular, had anything like that in mind.

To the best of my recollection- and it has been a long time since I read those records when I could not afford to buy copies as I would have liked to - that Rankin was the dictator. Counsels had to clear calling witnesses through him and he seems to have decided without consultation with members. (Which makes Hoover's determination that Warren not have his own man as general counsel, the norm, and having a Rankin in that role rather than the independent ^U Iney, Warren's preference, so significant.)

What little, and it is very little, I recall seeing about the Texas theater business was in a few KP files. There are some ~~my~~ things that I think I ^{can} recall. One is that it was not Julia Postal's idea that Oswald had gone into the theater without buying a ticket and there is no record I recall reflecting any search of his clothing to see if a stub was in a pocket. The explanation is that ⁱⁿ the official account is that Johnny Calvin Brewer, who

could not have had any^{way} of knowing, told her that. Also on that business, the FBI'd analysis of the bullets shows that the hammer did not fall on the one chambered in LHO's gun.

I think if you do with the records other than the CDs what you did with the CDs that will be a fine thing for research. You say that at some point you would give all that to a school. I hope that you then think of Hood, where all that have will be and which plans to make everything available to other institutions by modern optical techniques of which I know nothing at all.

On how the Commission worked, on the most essential things on which Rankin acted alone, without any consultation with any members, I have a long transcript of a tape of a meeting Liebeler had with students who were needling him after Garrison started making those noises. It was taped for me by a bright 18-year and I transcribed it. Liebeler says he was in his office looking at ^{parts of} his parts of the report & on which the presses were to role at midnight when an FBI courier comes it with confirmation of the Hall, etc. visit to Ohio. Liebeler then talks about his concern, that he rushed down the ^{hall} office to Rankin's office to say, "We've got a problem." His account is that after he explained it all to Rankin, Rankin said, "Correction, Mr. Liebeler: You have a problem. And you've until midnight to handle it." Liebeler then gives his boy-in-the-dike explanation of how that basic part of the report is his and his alone when he could make no changes that changed the content or length of any page of made an real changes in the index. *notes.*

All such bodies should work the way you set forth. I recall no record reflecting that the WC did that. And in and of itself that is, I think, important.

That is a truly amazing disk you got, with all those wonderful and so important historical records on it! And on a single disk!

The more I think of it the more I think it would be fine if you were to pursue that line of inquiry with all the WC records other than the CDs that are available.

I wish I'd thought to invite you to the con- Thanks! Sincerely, *W. C. W. Jr.*
vocation at which the degrees will be awarded.

In fact, I didn't think to invite anyone, But there will be three professors here you may want to meet. Wrone and McKnight you know about. The other is Ginocchio, a sociologist who knows enough about criminalistics to teach it at Wofford, Spartanburg. If you'd like to come, please do! They are all staying at the Red Horse Inn, which may be filled up by now. It is on West Patrick, or 40W, across from that Holiday Inn and the State Police Barracks. Another friend, a lawyer who is doing what he can to help the Univ. Ky complete the Senator Cooper Archive, is coming in Thursday night, also at Red Horse. Wrone and the others Friday night. We'll meet there for breakfast Saturday a.m. We were told, if you come, to be at Hood at 3:00 for the 3:30 beginning 8/22. I'm going to give them all a copy of your letter. If you'd like to come, we'd like to see you again.

H

143 Curtis Ave.
Williamstown, NJ 08094
12:35 pm August 13, 1993

Mr. Harold Weisberg
7627 Old Receiver Road
Frederick, MD 21702

Dear Mr. Weisberg:

Thank you for your response of the 10th instant.

I agree with your suggestion about reaching an invalid conclusion. My interest in this area has to do with *structure and mechanics*. The WC adopted a *structure*, such as it was, for the conduct of their work. A component of that structure was the requirement for three-day notification of witnesses. Accordingly, this internal requirement could foster further organization to the overall work effort of the staff. That is to say, that one would organize a work effort, I hesitate to use the term investigation, with that requirement in mind; a plan if you will. That does not appear to have occurred. The fact, as you point out, that there seems to be little relationship with the witness and the subject matter when correlated with where it occurred during the Commission's life seems to indicate, at least to me, a slipshod operation; one with no operative internal controls or direction. This assumes significance if one adopts the questionable assumption they were *conducting an investigation*.

This may not be a blinding revelation but, just as one has to question the actions of individuals when they act in a manner inconsistent with their training or procedures, one can look at an organization, i.e., the WC, in the same fashion. They established a set of rules and then didn't follow them.

I was not suggesting ^kany panky of any shadowy sort. Actually, the opposite. Given the alleged predetermined outcome, any structured and rational approach to an investigation could have been very dangerous. Following an acceptable investigatory blueprint, the result might have been very different, and that, as you have written, was unacceptable. A willy nilly approach, perhaps, best suited the mission statement contained in the Katzenbach memorandum. *Write a report that says LHO did it alone*. Had they adhered to an investigatory paradigm built on facts, from the bottom to the top, and laid out as if at trial, the outcome would have been very different.

As an example of the above, I am currently wrestling with the actions surrounding the incident at the Texas Theater. I have yet to discover any document, and I have gone through, I believe, all the initial¹ police reports, as to what established *probable cause* that LHO had done anything. I haven't even seen the question asked anywhere. Julia Postal's *intuition* notwithstanding, what established, in the mind's of the police, that anyone, in that theater, had committed any **crime**. You have

¹ The word *initial* is used injudiciously. Virtually all of the on-scene police officer's reports, in CD 81b. are dated from the first week of December.

written of the incongruity of LHO's alleged nervousness observed by Brewer, when contrasted with his behavior looking into the muzzle of Baker's pistol. Add to this mystery, Buhk's report of the Secret Service agents at the Marsalis Avenue library, about which no one seems interested. Or the behavior of the crowd outside the theater. Why were they riled up and wanting to kill LHO - the only crime he had committed, prior to resistance and discovery of concealed possession, which themselves raise other questions, was allegedly sneaking into the theater; hardly a capital offense. Someone had raised the crowd's dander and it wasn't over a free theater seat.

I've drifted a bit. My point above was not about hanky panky on the part of the Commission. Rather, it tends to confirm a haphazard approach which diminishes the argument they conducted an investigation, the problems of the individual counsels without merit. I guess that sums it up in a few words.

It has occurred to me that since I have obtained the 27 volumes and the CDs on microfilm, I probably ought to purchase the *key persons* files. If nothing else, it will comprise a valuable body of material, which can be donated to a school. Actually what needs to be done is to put all this material on CD-ROM...all of it...the 27 volumes, the CDs, the *key persons* files, the *other individuals and organizations* files can be fit onto one (1) 5 inch diameter CD-ROM. An example is a disk I received yesterday. It contains over 1000 first-hand documents of American history from pre-Columbus thru WWI, including all the Federalist Papers, plus over 27 volumes of interpretive history, such as Madison's records of the Constitutional Convention, Wilson's multi-volume history, Franklin's autobiography, and so on. All of it searchable and retrievable by random key-word or phrase. The darn thing even has over 100 historical works of art and photographs such as the original Bill of Rights. Another CD-ROM in my collection contains the 29 volume Compton's Encyclopedia plus over seven hours of historical audio-video segments and narration of significant topics. My suspicions are that the WC work will not soon be given this sort of treatment...can you imagine the potential. It could include all the still and motion photographic and audio material. Day dreaming is one thing, however it would be nice.

Again, thank you for your thoughts and consideration. Please extend my regards to Mrs. Weisberg.

Sincerely,



John W. Masland

PS: Please note my address above. Evidently, I have sent you a letter or two with the 3 & 4 inverted; the same mistake to others. Sorry! 143 is the correct address. I also have a PO Box...Box 783...same town and zip code...either is good...if I go on any extended trips the PO Box would be better...I'll advise you before leaving...

JW.M