

Mr. John Masland  
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4/28/92

Dear John,

This is a day on which I can be out so I'll probably be responding to your 4/24 and 26 intermittently. My legs let me use them only briefly, and cleaning the pool is now a big job for me and the riding mower just stopped, according to the new boy who is doing my mowing, and something happened to the push mower causing what appears to be a drop of solder showing. So, in between trying to care for these things:

On the Fox JFK special a friend told me that even the aired after-screening call-ins were crazy, starting with Watergate! His impression is yours but he added that he believed James Earl Jones was also embarrassed. *Seen y Belin, him in the front and always right because he says he's right.*

Thanks for the Belin transcript which I'll read when I can. That poor sick man is as close as any I've observed to being an Ameriform Judenrat and I think it is eating him up.

Wrone learned the source of the study guide, can't get a copy or any response!

On the Fax exploitation, thanks but no hurry.

All I know about Zirbel's book other than what you say is from reading an ancillary use, I think in a supermarket tabloid. Perhaps a British paper. I formed the opinion that it is terrible and worse than useless.

One does not have to be a professional historian to be competent to do a good book on the assassination. The professional historians abdicated save for the ego-tripping Louisiana guy whose name escapes me at the moment, now, it is Kurtz. And he was atrocious.

In today's mail I have a xerox of the American Historical Review and it is not easy, from what Wrone told me, to be less professional. Neither Hoffman nor Meagher nor I qualify as professional historians and we did decent books. Save for his dishonesties Lane's first would have been OK, albeit dated before it appeared, and what lawyer has written a decent book? Not one. Or, I find no excuse for the exploiters and commercializers, of whom, perhaps from ignorance of his book, I include Zirbel because he is a lawyer and he is not before a jury and he knows what responsibility is. *Worth also a lawyer with bad book*

All these whores boast about the length and intensity of their alleged efforts and study and they lie. I know those who have gotten my books, for example, or who have asked for copies of the records I make available to all in the field as all with any pretense of knowledge of the field know. I've heard from three strangers by midday today, for example, and not one ordering any book. I did not hear from Zirbel.

One more thought before dipping the leaves and pine needles: I disagree that his theory is as good as any of the others unless you mean they are all no good. And while you do not identify those you refer to as his friends, I do not agree that LBJ and his friends had the motive, means and opportunity. *from what we know, you assume it?*

I believe that theories especially should first be thought ~~through~~ through by asking two questions: is this reasonable and if that test is satisfied, is it possible.

I believe it is not reasonable to assume that LBJ would have known of any plot by any friends if only because he thenceforth would have spent the rest of his life in jail. This need not apply to friends, but assuming they all had motive, what friends or what kind of friends could have had the means ~~not~~ only to pull it off but to cover it up for so long? Is it reasonable to believe that they knew in advance that the police ~~and~~ federal agencies would not really investigate the crime? Or possible, is it possible that they could depend on that and on no clues being left, no shooter being caught? Seen? If this was a professional job, which of the friends knew what "mechanics" to get and how and <sup>to</sup> trust?

I do believe that the <sup>P</sup>urpose was to make LBJ President. But this does not have to mean it was on his behalf and I do not believe it was.

Not that we can assume he is innocent in the field. There are many stories about the use of Mexican pistoleros in at least one of his campaigns.

If motive includes intent is there any basis for saying that LBJ had the intent? I think this is unfair to him and without any factual basis, whether or not seemingly reasonable.

In assessing means is it not necessary to do this with due consideration of the established fact of the assassination, only beginning with Oswald and not overlooking such details as planting 399 and getting away with it, whether 399 is or is not the bullet Tomlinson picked up at the hospital?

Perhaps ~~it~~ + <sup>by me</sup> misundersatnd your 4/26 reference to "control from the top" but I recall no use of this other <sup>by me</sup> than in terms of the whitewash, the coverup, the control of the non-investigation, whether or not also of the Commission.

I disagree strongly with Stone et al in their conviction that the crime and the coverup were one and the same. I am certain that Hoover was not part of the crime and I am also certain that whether or not he dictated the FBI's covering up he could have ended it. He did control the Commission and the FBI did pretty much control the willing major media. But I know of no reason to connect any of that with the crime itself and believe strongly that there was no connection.

I'd have to read the book to be able to tell you whether the concepts ~~it~~ it seem reasonable or possible to me.

On your speculation (page 2) (and I know no reason to believe that if he had been a shooter his target was Connally), you refer to a fight or flight <sup>instinct</sup>. I believe fight was not possible, and unless rabidly insane he'd have known that. But if flight had been his intention he'd not have left most of his money insufficient for a real flight in any event with Marina and he'd certainly have skipped, not bottled himself up in a movie.

*where, I think, his hope was just not to be seen for a while.*

There is a very strong emotional shock from seeing the head explode, as you say, but there you end consideration of emotions. There is something we do know of Oswald's emotions and I think it is inconsistent with guilt, especially, with seeing the head explode.

By all accounts he was quite cool. He was never really emotional in this sense once taken away by the police. He was angry with Hosty, yes, but that is different. Unless he was really crazy his behavior is not only consistent with innocence but I think it suggests he expected help in establishing it.

If Zirbel has him the lone assassin then on that basis alone his book is an intended commercialization and exploitation and he is grossly ignorant of fact. Nobody was able to duplicate the shooting attributed to the duffer Oswald, *That simple.*

If we assume that the official account of what you refer to as his meanderings is valid, that does not, as I see it, represent what you refer to as flight. He'd never have walked those blocks to get onto a bus he knew could not get very far because of the great traffic jam he had created, he'd never have offered the cab to the nice old lady at the bus station, and he'd never have gone to a movie. The only reasonable explanation I've been able to give myself of his going to a movie is his belief that he could stay there safely in the subdued light until it had quieted down a bit. Thus I never believed Brewer's story that he had not bought a ticket. That would have attracted attention to him.

I've heard that Kantor's book was reprinted and that the Vintage reprint of Meagher's is in the stores.

I think that Crenshaw lied about the LBJ phone call first because I was confident that there had not been enough time for LBJ to know and know where to call and then, if he had, he'd not have asked for the junior doctor but for a senior man. Then I heard that Gary Mack checked with the LBJ Library and they have no record of any such call.

In short, I have yet to see or hear of a supported theory. I think none is responsibly possible without a solution or at least a certain explanation of the crime itself.

Bill joins me in hoping you can get up here again soon.

Our best,

*Harold*