

Dear Sam,

6/1/86

Greg has kept me informed of your JFK efforts. It appears that you have been doing as well as you could hope. Good luck on your trip to L.A.

Rather a coincidence that you should on the 28th caution me about calls from a psychiatric drunk who phones and confesses to the MLK murder. I've not heard from him but on the 27th I did have a strange call. Immediately I made a note of it.

The operator asked at a little after 7 p.m. for Bernard Weisberg. Emphasizing the "Bernard" I told the operator there is no Bernard Weisberg here. At this point a man who did not sound as though he were drunk or under the influence of anything else interjected that he might have the wrong first name. The operator then asked if I would accept the charges. I asked who was calling and when she did this man said only "Clay Bertram." I then said that I would accept the call but only if the charges were prepaid. The caller refused and hung up and I've heard nothing further from him or about this.

This is the first phony/nut in a long time.

I share your doubts about anyone who confesses to the MLK or any other assassination.

Best regards,

Mr. Warberg,

I don't blame you for not taking a collect call from Clay Bertrand, I wouldn't accept a collect call from Santo Claus or the Carter Bunny or anything else that didn't exist, either. I'm not selling you a pig, Mr. I'm selling you a poke. The call was just to size you up and offer a miniature, freebie support. There is no way I am going to want either your money or my time until we have established just exactly what it is we are going to ~~do~~ in the first place. Consider me a salesman. Here is my sample case, ^{want this} ~~Warberg~~

First of all I feel I possess the biographical and experiential criteria of Clay Bertrand; and before this letter is over I will capsule and display this criteria and offer ~~at least~~ ~~the framework of~~ a ^{hair} for at least minimum verification ^{of} for those credentials.

Secondly I feel that I possess such a broad range of acquaintanceship within the New Orleans underworld and overworld of the early 60's that I am in acquaintance with not only Oswald, but with at least 10 other individuals, both public and private, who were involved with the Daley Plaza conspiracy; and that this broad range of acquaintanceship plus the rather precarious but unequivocal position of being investigative

the 'true' Clay Bertrand has placed me in contact with so many cover-up figures also, that I have formed some hot leads concerning;

- a) the Dealey Plaza second gunman who fired a pistol from the bushes atop the white balustrade adjoining Dealey Plaza and the grassy knoll, plus
- b) the chief tactical coordinator of this operation, that mysteriously 'unidentified' CIA operative which appeared anonymously before congressional ~~hearings~~ ^{committee} ~~committee~~ ^{committee}. ~~And was, otherwise,~~ ^{alias of ~~known as~~ 'Maurice Bishop'.}

I know this ~~stands~~ ^{stands} second selling job sounds like a tall order, Mrs. Weisberg, and, indeed, it is so tall that until we get the first item out of the way of argument we aren't going to touch at all on this second item or the third or the ~~and~~ fourth that follow it, either.

But in the spirit of merely presenting a sample case, Mrs. Weisberg, let me assure you that if we ever reach agreement on items one and two, the third item will be a plausible, parsimonious ~~easy~~ explanation of just what 'went wrong' at Dealey Plaza; and that an acceptance of number three would lead to the tightly reasoned, though as yet ~~unheard of~~, theory that the death of JFK at Dealey Plaza had been ~~never printed,~~

a mistake and that the sole intended target had been John Corally alone.

Needless to say, Mr. Weisberg, it would have been expensive and tedious to cram even the framework of this 'gift list' into a single long distance call. Like I said, you did us both ~~right~~ ^{a favor} in refusing.

So I'm not going to touch on items two, three, or four. The rest of this letter will concern itself with item one alone. Let me ask you to pause for a moment in reading this letter and close your eyes and try to re-visualize x file 75 of the Warren Commission long enough to conjure yourself up a subjective view of that entity known as Clay Bertrand and compare that vision to the following set of autobiographical parameters.

The Clay Bertrand I offer you, Mister Weisberg, is a tall, blond, 1963-year-old, wildly raffish quasi-attorney whose hobby was representing degenerates and whose vocation was as a computer expert for a Michigan-based NASA contractor; and who holds a reputation as being an eccentric genius and ~~is~~ ^{is} notorious of being an alcoholic communist and holds record of possessing Q-clearance from the Atomic Energy Commission. Close enough?; for opener 2.

Secondly let me offer you the following

set of experiential parameters which appear in inverse order of both chronology and pertinence:

- a) an October 1963 adoption of the alias Clay Marchand; and
- b) an August 1963 steering of Oswald to an attorney who was the business partner of Stephen Blothin who was Dean Andrews' defence attorney at his 1968 perjury trial; and, most importantly,
- c) a July 1963 conversation with Lee Harvey Oswald in a ~~conversation~~ dialogue encompassing the elements:
 - i) a shared loyalty to Fidel Castro;
 - ii) Dallas in general and a building adjacent to Dealey Plaza in particular;
 - iii) an assault both murderous and comic upon the person of John F. Kennedy;
 - iv) an upstairs window, sniper's vantage point, and;
 - v) triangulation of fire.

Without insulting you with the obvious, Mr. Weisberg, let me underline the parallel uncanny parallels between these elements and those offered by George Press at Clay Shaw's 1968 conspiracy trial. If you do so I am sure that you must come to the conclusion that either it did indeed hold a whole lot in a name

with Clay Bertrand or that there was almost a supernatural amount of coincidence here or - always of course hypothetically possible - that I am lying. I cannot offer you any illumination at all on the first two feasibility's, but everything I further say will concern itself with the issue of credibility. I offer you first the verification of detailed verimultitude. I maintain that the 7163 conversations between Oswald and I contained the following specific elements.

Oswald and I met at the Katzenjammer bar. We were introduced by the proprietor. He introduced Oswald as what sounded like Al Heydel.

He said Al/See was 'renting office space upstairs'.

Oswald was drinking whiskey on the rocks and was wearing an expensive sweater and cheap slacks and peppy loafers.

Oswald and I discussed a book called Saste on Cuba and he showed signs of having read the book and of being eloquently knowledgeable of Castro's marxist revolution.

Oswald recognized my Richard security ~~over~~ badge and exhibited desire for similar employment.

Oswald displayed facility in the solution of 'number series' questions which I offered as sample of the Richard Extraord exam.

Oswald said he had 'taken a lot of these
tests in the service.

Oswald asked where I lived and when I
told him and reversed the question he
said he lived 'in a ratty apartment out
Magazine (st).

Oswald asked me where I was from and when
I told him Dallas Texas he volunteered
that he was, coincidentally, from nearby
Ft. Worth himself.

I talked extensively of Dallas politicians,
athletes, and underworld figures and
Oswald didn't seem to be interested in
a word I said.

I mentioned that I worked for the Dallas
Post office in the Terminal Annex (which
abuts Dealey Plaza) and Oswald didn't
seem interested in that either.

I attempted to back out of the Texas conversation
gracefully and told Al/See that chances
were we wouldn't have any recognizable,
mutual Texas acquaintances because when
I lived in Texas I went by an alias.
I told Oswald that 'while I was in Dallas
I went by the alias John Michael
Bower.

Oswald told me that this was a coincidence
because when he lived in Texas he used
an alias too. Oswald told me that 'when
I lived in Ft. Worth I went by the
alias See Harvey Oswald.

"Oh!" I exclaimed to Oswald, "then you're the guy who defected to Russia, aren't you?"

Oswald was impressed, indeed stunned at my knowledge.

I told Oswald that I recognized his name because I had read it in a Dallas Morning and that I had been favorably impressed at his brave stand and that you were one of my heroes.

Oswald quickly let me know that he didn't want to talk about Russia and that "they (the USSR) have their problems and we (the USA) have our problems too.

I form the guess that Oswald's sweater is Kashmir wool and that he purchased it in Babu. Oswald says yes to both guesses and presents a demeanor of increased respect.

With eyes narrowed Oswald shows retention of the sound of my Texas alias and asks, "Say, you aren't any kin to L. J. Garcia Sany Bowers, are you?"

I say no, but that maybe my north Georgia stepfather was.

Oswald pays for a round of drinks and apologizes for waiting so long to do so and says that he's "on short money," and that the only reason I am out drinking tonight is because my wife is out of town.

Oswald orders beer because it is cheaper.

I surreptitiously swap beers with Oswald by means of confusing the bar tender when he delivered them. It is and was my belief that I was getting LSD mixed in my brew and I wished to spread the joy around and it is my conviction that I was successful in my endeavor. As Oswald begins to get loose we begin to discuss theoretical Marxism. We center in on a criticism of Earl Browder and Gus Hall and form agreement that an 'apple-pie' American communist party independent of Soviet alliances is just what this benighted hemisphere is in need of. Like I said, it begins to become apparent that Oswald's consciousness has been expanded. It also becomes apparent that we have been 'speaking for a while' too.

Jack Martin comes down stairs from Guy Banister's office. He is wearing a wool skullcap and a furrowed brow. He passes up several bar stools and plumps himself down beside Oswald. Oswald reddens. I catch the hint. I stop talking about the Great American Revolution and go to the men's room. Oswald looks almost grateful. When I get back Jack Martin is gone.

Oswald gets nasty. Oswald starts talking like a drunk Texas Aggie. For no rational reason whatsoever he switches the conversation to John F. Kennedy. He says he'd like to kill him.

I got upset internally. I had sort of liked Oswald and what he now speaks of is of such a dangerously sedition area that I feel almost trapped in any reply I make. I start off sputtering. I offer some weak stuff about Kennedy's domestic good outweighing his foreign evils and how Johnson probably would be worse anyway. I do like talking to a post. Oswald goes on ranting and raving about killing Kennedy and how anybody who calls himself a Marxist ought to agree with him.

Oswald sort of pisses me off. I decide to give him a dose of his own medicine. "See," I say finally, "let me tell you a little story about Switzerland back in the days of William Tell. Back in those days Germany conquered Switzerland and the German Emperor rode through the streets of Berne. From an overhanging window a Swiss patriot tossed a bladder of goat's blood in the Emperor's lap and this was the last time a German Emperor dared to ride in triumph through Swiss streets." "For See," I continued, "let's not talk about killing Kennedy; killing Kennedy wouldn't do Castro a bit of good anyway; let's throw a bladder of goat's blood on Kennedy's lap; let's throw a bladder of goat's blood in Kennedy's lap."

Oswald said not another word. Oswald staggered out into the darkness.

And that's it, Mister Weisberg, and if you'll allow me the redundancy of emphasizing that this conversation opened with i) our admiration of Castro, and ii) a tangential reference to Daley Plaza, and iii) an assault (or pair of assaults) on the person of John F. Kennedy, and iv) an upstairs window sniper's vantage point, and v) by our conflictively suggested methods of assault, triangulation of fire; I'll then make my claim that my tale fits the bill of a Clay Bertrand ala Perry to a rather startling tee.

But it does nothing to prove what I say is ~~was~~ true or not.

That's the reason for my great detail and such detail entails a challenge too. It is my challenge, Mister Weisberg, that I am capable of passing a polygraph test not only on the generalities of whether I spoke to Oswald or not, but, more impressively, on each and every element that I have listed above.

And, if you would then remain so much of a doubting Thomas as to feel that I might be one of those slippery rogues who is a skilfully pathological liar

I would be most most happy to repeat the
same skien under the influence of sodium
~~to~~ Benothal too. I like the High Five.

I could give you some stuff under the
High Five that would curl your hair,
and ^{also right very well} lead you into an easy acceptance
of my offered items Two, Three, and
Four too.

So please accept my 7 PM call this ~~is~~
Tuesday the Third. See Wlig, Mr. Weisberg,
the absolute worst you could do is waste
half a saw buck on an amusing fogde...
and what else should you expect the true
Clay Bertrand to be?

Sincerely yours,
Michael M. Smith

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