

1/23/74, 10:30 pm--I just got a call from a grad student named Jeff Sobal. He said he had seen the article about my book but had not gotten a chance to call until now. He said he once worked for a magician named George Perrin. Perrin told him about another magician named Bill Neff who also used to be a ballistics expert. Perrin said that "they" got Neff (hired him) to do ballistics investigation, he presumes for the Warren Commission, but is not sure. At any rate, his findings were the opposite of what "they" wanted so they fired him. However, he said he would continue to work on it on his own. A month later he was murdered. Sobal does not know when this happened or who "they" were. He said that Neff's wife Evelyn is living in Lancaster, Pa. and that she apparently has Neff's files, including photographs. He said that as far as he knew Perrin's latest address was Julius Anderson Theater, Springfield, Mass. His mail would probably be forwarded if sent to 964 Washington St., Gloucester, Mass 01930. I'll try to get Mrs. Neff's phone number or address. It all sounds wierd, but I'd like to find out more. Any info? Have you ever heard of him?

Howard Roffman

Dear Howard, Your memo of 1/23/74 on the call you had from Jeff Sobal about Bill Neff: I'm making a file on Neff in case something comes of this either way. There is a Neff in the FBI reports, I think, but not as in this version, as a ballistics expert for the implication of "they," officialdom. There are some things about this suggestive of a hoax that is not innocent, so be on guard but receptive. Because of the connection with your book, be particularly careful, however.

(I didn't know there had been a story on the book. Unless it was the Courier story of Nov., which is long ago to prompt a 1/23 call. In this connection, the Phila. radio show of which I wrote you is on WFIL, for when your publisher is ready. When the time comes, and I strongly discourage until then, phone Abbey Barclay and introduce yourself. He is a nice guy in news. I met him when he was a student at Trinity, Hartford.)

Whether or not Neff is a name in the official accounts, Perrin certainly is. And when this Perrin is a showman, more, a magician? "They" ask a magician who is a former ballistics expert to do what from the first they know all about and the problems they have with it? Who could have done better than the FBI? And why should "they" want better than the best they could get? What kind of ballistics expert makes his living as a magician?

And this is why he was murdered a month later? A bit much.

However, Lancaster is not that far from Philadelphia, so there is every reason to waste the phone call or a letter and ask for access to his alleged files. If you phone, tape. You can get her address from the Lancaster City Directory, which may be available in your library. Or try information for her phone. If you are uncertain about the number because there is more than one Neff who could be the widow (and she stayed a widow a long time), make it person-to-person. I have found that most operators will make the proper inquiries on a person-to-person call, to make proper identification before charging for the call.

Perhaps the best approach would be to write Perrin first and see what kind of response, if any, that you get.

The showbiz part of this is fascinating because the rest is inherently incredible. However, I would follow it up because of other possibilities. HW 1/27/74