

for Wicking



QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY
KINGSTON, ONTARIO

DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICS

3 July 1969

Mr. Tom Wicker
The New York Times
New York, New York

Dear Mr. Wicker:

Although the matter discussed in this letter is not of great importance, you may be able to settle a question that has bothered me for some time.

I just finished reading your article, "That Day in Dallas", in Greengerg and Parker, The Kennedy Assassination and the American Public. On page 29 of that book you say:

As we (on the press bus) came out of the underpass, I saw a motorcycle policeman drive over the curb, across an open area, and up a railroad bank for a few feet, where he dismounted and started scrambling up the bank.

Would you please tell me whether you are certain that you witnessed this after you went through the underpass, and not before.

The reason that I ask is because you are not the only witness who reported seeing this policeman. Since everybody tends to think that the reference "up a railroad bank" or "up a grassy slope" refers to the famous grassy knoll, there is considerable consternation about the reports of these witnesses. I am inclined to think that they accurately reported what they saw, but photographs of the "grassy knoll" that were taken immediately after the shooting show that no policeman ran his motorcycle over the curb. One of the witnesses was in a position where he could not have seen that event if it took place on the "grassy knoll".

If your report is correct, then it is possible that the witnesses are correct in their descriptions, but were referring to a different location from the one that we imagine, for the "grassy knoll" is to your right before you go through the underpass, whereas you refer to a grassy slope that is on the other side of the underpass, on your right as you come out of the underpass.

I understand that the matter is not important, but if you would be good enough to answer this letter, I will at least be able to understand why the testimony of witnesses does not in this case correspond with the evidence of photographs.

Yours truly,
Richard Bernabei
Richard Bernabei

The New York Times

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July 10, 1969

Mr. Richard Bernabei
Department of Classics
Queen's University
Kingston, Ontario

Dear Mr. Bernabei:

I wouldn't want to rely on my memory if someone's life depended on it, but with that qualification, I am pretty clear that I saw the motorcycle policeman go up the railroad embankment after we emerged from the underpass.

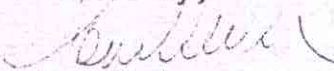
That would not, of course, have been immediately after the shooting, since the press buses were fairly far back in the procession and since my colleagues have now about convinced me I was in the second press bus.

I know about the grassy-knoll controversy and have never thought the policeman I saw had anything to do with the grassy knoll. Mark Lane used to make speeches, I'm told, citing the passage you cite, and concluding that I was part of the conspiracy because it did not appear in my published account of the assassination in The Times of Nov. 23, 1963. The reason for that is that, in the context of the whole day, I attached no importance to the matter then, nor do I now.

Let me request that if you are writing anything about this matter you refrain from quoting me in any way to suggest that I doubt or disapprove the Warren Commission's findings. On the contrary, I believe the Commission provides us the only tenable thesis about what happened.

Of course, you may use what I have written in any way you wish to support your own conclusions.

Sincerely,



Tom Wicker
Associate Editor



QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY
KINGSTON, ONTARIO

14 July 1969

DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICS

Mr Tom Wicker
The New York Times, Washington Bureau
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr Wicker:

Thank you for your prompt reply to my letter of 3 July 1969, in which I questioned you regarding your observation of events near Dealey Plaza in Dallas at the time when President Kennedy was killed.

As indicated in my letter, I desired only to resolve the contradiction between apparently reliable witnesses and absolutely reliable photographs. Your letter convinces me, as I suspected, that there is not a contradiction after all. I agree with you that the resolution of this minor problem does not bear heavily on the question whether a shot originated from the grassy knoll on the Plaza, but I am glad to have it settled, for the apparent contradiction between the witnesses and the photographs made no sense. It is clear that the two sets of evidence referred to two different places.