

Dear George,

10/16/83

I've begun to read proofs of Davison's Oswald's Games. I have no reluctance in disclosing my belief, after reading only her notes and Introduction: it is Davison's Games. You will not read this as critically as I nor will you have the information I have against which to assess her writing, her honesty and her fairness, but I have questions about all of these things from this limited reading.

With books of this kind I've learned over the years to examine citations of sources. This is because they are usually lacking and lack credibility and often relevance and because the authors generally kowtow to the demands of scholarship by making a show of notes that most readers and scholars are not in a position to evaluate. I find that Davison conforms. As she does also in her bibliography, another demand of the current phony concepts of scholarship. She quotes indiscriminately, without evaluation and it is clear, only biased, prejudiced or angled sources congenial to her own and actually confessed preconception. Newman, for example, who built a bad book on the silly notion that Oswald came back from Russia with a radio that enabled him to listen to Castro's broadcasts (Newman assumes he did), thus suggesting KGB and KGB radios, when in reality Castro broadcasts were readily received on standard US radios - and besides, Oswald's didn't even work.

There is relevant content in many of my books, particularly Oswald in New Orleans and the first Whitewash, yet she does not include them in her biblio. She also could not have ignored them if she had consulted the usual standard sources. Need I tell you of the relevance of the Commission's executive session transcripts, which I got under FOIA and published in facsimile in two books? She makes no mention of these books or these transcripts in her biblio or notes. How can an honest writer ignore such sources and yet build so much on a story in a paper Oswald is conjectured to have read - whether or not the story was accurate - so much that in the Intro it is basic? See pp. 22-3

Yet she includes dubious books, like Priscilla McMillan's, which even Marina disputed about Lee in their joint TV appearances.

After I acquired perhaps a half-million pages of once-secret official records by FOIA litigation - and this is something no serious researcher cannot automatically learn in the course of the usual research - I've adopted what you may regard as a simplistic test: whether or not writers who pretend to definitive studies ask me if I have any relevant information they can use. She hasn't. And I have much. My presumption, again based on long experience, is that those who do not ask do not want what is uncongenial to the preconceptions with which they begin.

She actually doesn't hide her ^{preconception}. She presumes the complete and unquestionable accuracy of the official conclusions (at the end of Intro) and actually says that she intends to prove one aspect, that there was no conspiracy. This she will do she also makes clear by equating all alleged conspiracy theories with the Idfton and Summers books, both of which are at best dubious.

She goes further than ^{this} she. She actually says that all books critical of the Report are conspiracy theories. You know very well that is a lie. (See for example page 15, penult graf)

There are factual errors of varying significances, from her covering up of deliberate official and prejudicial leaking (14) by stating merely that the media reported certain information. Or that "there was no ~~index~~ index," referring to the Commission's evidence, when there is an index to the 15 volumes of ~~testimony~~ testimony and Meagher published an index that included the other 11 volumes.

She uses Lane as a straw man and equates all critics with him. He is dishonest so all critics are dishonest. He picks and chooses, so all do. Well, I've seen enough, and I believe cite enough above, to state that nobody picks and chooses more than she does.

She is not a modest woman. On 19 she boasts that her material was not published, except by the Commission ("never been published anywhere except in the hearings") but this, too, is a lie. From her notes I published much of it in 1967. And where she makes so much of Oswald's writings, a matter I'm certain I'll return to as I read more and spot further omissions, I could have given her access to a separate file of all his known writings I obtained ^{from} the FBI. It is an extensive file of which I made a copy and filed separately for the access of others, as I read the records as I received them.

Of course there is an alternative to her as a liar on this, but that speaks no better for her book. It is that she is merely ignorant. That and the fact that she is a woman is all that is required for ^{sources} Miller's endorsement.

Where she uses the most dubious ^{sources} sources, and in this instance a fake, she is careful not to identify the National Enquirer (22, graf 1)

Nor is she above just plain dirty writing (22) saying of the critical books that "each claiming to have uncovered the truth about Dallas." You know that this, too, is a lie, at least about all the responsible books. This in the midst of amateur shrinkery where she gives as her purpose in writing this book, it "will present evidence that Castro's public warning did, in fact, inspire Oswald to assassinate the president." (She has yet to mention Harker's name or how his story was regarded by most editors or whether it is in any context or without one, or even any confirmation of it, the real reason she resorts to but hides the identification of the Enquirer and Comer Clark's fiction in it.)

As this point she also invokes "records in the National Archives," to which she says elsewhere she went, leaving it to the reader to assume that she spent eons in diligent research there, when she may have been no more than a tourist. In fact she does not even know how to cite such records and never once gives any kind of citation - other than she could have picked up from Lifton. All those records are easily, uniquely and properly cited by an identification of their own, each and every one. Yet she has none, not one, not even in her notes.

Where she goes into a disguisedly third-hand (or worse) representation of what one of the red Childs brothers told the FBI (23) she does not give his name or ANY source, here or in her notes.

To cover the Commission, she here (23) pretends that plots against Castro were not known at the Commission's time. Also, Castro himself had denounced them and arrested countless attempting assassins, as was well reported. And in here and elsewhere conjecturing about them she omits that the FBI itself withheld knowledge of those she refers to from the Commission.

Only a minor fraction of her writing is included in the notes and I am sure one of the reasons for these notes, as distinguished from scholarly footnotes, is to hide the fact that she cannot source most of it credibly. She begins with preconceptions, if not also longings, in which even the facts of the crime are immaterial and even the remote possibility of any conspiracy is ignored. Of course, unless she ignores this possibility and the facts of the crime she has no book at all. Again simplistically, the shooting attributed to Oswald, whether as duffer or lucky one, was entirely beyond the capability of the best shots, who did try and try and try. On this basis alone, whether one regards Oswald as guilty or innocent, there was a conspiracy. But if there was a conspiracy, she had no book at all and none of what it can mean for her. How an honest writer can even approach a book of this stated preconception without even a pretense of evaluating the evidence, whether that of the report, which she reads, or of the critical literature, is beyond me.

So also is it beyond me that a writer can pretend honesty to herself when at least a half-million new pages of information have been disclosed and she does not even mention them, leave alone seek access. And as you know, what I have is available to

anyone, without supervision and with copies. In her case, meaning her subject, this includes subject filings of FBI and some CIA records pertinent to her subject and not from the Commission's files. It includes, with LHO's writings, any FBI comments or analyses. It is reasonably obvious that she did not want anything to trouble her preoccupation. Or she'd have at least made some effort to learn what there was that was new and available. Or even written a letter to the FBI asking it.

For her entirely. Intro she is so scholarly she has a grand total of 12 notes, some of which are meaningless and some are not really notes, such as reference to the Liebler memo as in the Archives (and also Lifton's book) (Here again, that AP story was obtained by the FBI, not the Commission, and is in its files.)

In general, the Notes amount to a statement that the Commission was right because it says it is right. There is a second largest source, HSCA, which is about the same thing. Almost all the rest is biased and prejudiced and not infrequently dubious source of dubious relevance like McMillan, the Rosenberg case and Nizer, Shrinks, Newman, Lifton, Summers, etc.

She attributes criticism of JFK to LHO (262) but has no reference to the official rather than her unofficial source, that LHO liked JFK and his policies.

Some of her notes are conclusory, like (263) LHO's allegedly "grandiose plans." She also quotes Newman on "Oswald's plans." Was he wired into heaven, hell, or did Newman have a special unknown source? How could he know LHO's plans? (264)

267 she refers to a record "obtained under the Freedom of Information Act." This suggests by her, and she didn't. It is no way to cite a source but it is a way to hide a cribbing.

Some of her notes are exactly opposite fact, like "Michael Payne and ~~insulting~~ bundle containing rifle." Payne swore to the opposite, that he knew of no rifle in the bundle and would have prohibited it, as a Quaker, if he had.

Her note on Hosty on 272 is not factually correct in a single aspect. It is untrue in all particulars and her conjecture is without foundation. Here again, I have a separate file of the entire IG Inspector's Report and underlying records, if she'd had any interest in fact. She also cites no source, the purpose of citations.

Based on this alone I predict a great success for this book. The louder and more irresponsible a book on this subject, the more willing publishers are to do and promote it and the greater the reception by the media, most often those who may have some gnawings over not having done what a free press should do when there are controversial questions of great moment. And, of course, who in the media will criticize a book that presumes the correctness of the official investigation of the assassination when the media itself never really questioned any aspect of that investigation?

I've been annotating as I read and will continue to do so as and when I can.

Sincerely,

Another afterthought, George,

Because I'm intrigued by what does not interest you at all in Jean Davison's book.

Why not ask her if she is in any way related to or to the family of Dr. Alexis Davison - also of Georgia- where she taught college freshmen, she says.

He was a spook in our Moscow Embassy with a medical cover. He was caught in the Ponkowsky case, servicing a drop.

And for all the anti-Communist phobia of his mother, he gave Oswald her name and address when LHO returned to the US and told him to look her up.

His mother was a strongly anti-Communist, White Russian who married his father I think when his father was part of our expeditionary force against the young Communist state. Or almost during the revolution.

I'm still fascinated that she would have gotten Butler's trash and give it as turning her on.

H