

Mr. John Reese  
206 Plantation Road  
Lancaster, S.C. 29720

11/17/90

Dear Mr. Reese,

Before getting to the questions you ask, thanks for the enclosures with your 11/12. If you'll look at page 416 of From Dallas to Watergate, you'll observe that what Scott refers to skips from 10/2 until 11/26/63. I believe I told you that a couple of days before JFK was assassinated it was announced, with scanty attention, that a re-evaluation of our Vietnam involvement indicated that we could begin to withdraw our "advisers" and that two days after the assassination it was announced that re-evaluation of the re-evaluation disclosed it was optimistic. I regard it as not less than dishonest for one pretending to ~~not~~ be an expert withhold this from his reader, particularly with the uses made on this page that ignore what I cite.

Where I think it necessary I'll repeat your question.

What Foreman did was persuade Ray he'd throw the case if Ray did not agree to the plea Foreman made without consultation with Ray. Ray believed also, from what the judge had said, that he'd not be able to fire Foreman and get another lawyer. Thus as soon as he was in the Nashville jail he wrote the judge first to fire Foreman and then to file the request that under Tenn. law should have gotten him a retrial, not that he'd had one.

I don't know who fired the shot that killed Dr. King or exactly where Ray was. I am certain Ray was not at the scene of the crime and not far away.

I don't remember seeing the Dorman pictures but I did see the others you mention.

After all these years I am inclined to believe that it is Oswald in the Altgens picture of the CS/D front stairs. On the Lovelady shirt, I refer you to the last page of the index to Photographic Whitewash, below the end of the index, for what Mrs. Lovelady told me when that entire book had been printed except for the index.

Thanks for the A & E as It Happened cassette and your useful listing of its contents. Remember, these were reporters, not lawyers, and when they used the word "arrest" that did not mean literally. But there are interesting and provocative things in it. I'm delaying looking at it until a professor friend and I can do it together.

John Connally knew very well that his having heard a shot before he was hit means that at the least there was this one shot more than is officially accounted for. I can't explain his position.

Although it was reported that Secret Service agents were on the Grassy Knoll immediately after the shooting, none were there. Some believe that other credentials, like alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms agents were <sup>shown</sup> there.

Robert Blakey began with the preconception that the assassination was a mafia job but given the unprecedented and unequal opportunity he had he was unable to prove it.

I do not believe that Oswald was at the Tippit murder site.

I think Robert Oswald "wrote" the book condemning his mother and saying that "she was guilty not because it was safe but because he was ~~paid~~ paid. He was given 15% of Marina's gross to keep her pacified and to get her agreement when needed.

While as you suggest, the MI's knowing what Gilteer had said and of the early November threat against JFK in Chicago Hoover should have known that something was up, those two and others of that period of which I also know were not at all unusual. The FBI and others receive such reports regularly. There was at least one other in Miami that should have caused the added concern you seem to have in mind, and that at least figured in the Secret Service cancellation of the 11/19/63 motorcade there.

I think you are wrong in saying that the Hidell name was not mentioned until the day after the assassination. Probably we'd found nothing on NBC's film about this they could use. The doctors' press conference the afternoon of the assassination repeated several times that JFK's anterior neck wound was from the front but you do not list that. Apparently ~~XXX~~ NBC had no such footage.

When you visit your sister in Baltimore you are welcome to come here. Depends on where in Baltimore she lives how long it would take. Could be as little as an hour or less.

Of the items you highlighted in your listing of what A&E used, that Dr. Burkley said there was a shot to the right temple is new to me. He did not say that in his death certificate, which I printed in facsimile in Post Mortem, and I see that the doctors were quoted as saying the neck wound was from the front.

There were erroneous reports of the finding of other weapons.

Oswald's history if left-wing causes, your words, appear to have begun with a rather rapid report of such things from an army intelligence unit in Texas since disbanded, with all its records allegedly destroyed. This was from their domestic intelligence files.

Most of the other things you marked were reported and were not true. Always happens in spectacular crimes.

Thanks for your kind comments about my work.

Check enclosed.

Best wishes,



Harold Weisberg

November 12, 1990

Mr. Harold Weisberg  
7627 Old Receiver Road  
Frederick, Maryland 21701

Dear Mr. Weisberg,

I finished reading Frame-Up shortly after my last letter to you. I say again what a magnificent piece of work. This should be required reading in political science courses nationwide. I just finished PHOTOGRAPHIC WHITEWASH last night and was similarly moved. My questions to you about these two books are as follows:

- a) Considering the fact that Ray appears to be no idiot, how did Foreman sell the 99 year deal to him? Surely Ray must have known electrocution was remote. Did this "bribery" aspect turn the trick?
- b) In your opinion, who fired the fatal shot? Where was Ray when this shot was fired?
- c) Did you ever see the other Hughes, Dillard, Dorman, and Betzner photos you were trying to uncover in PHOTOGRAPHIC? The fact that the FBI and the Commission wanted nothing to do with these pictures is perhaps the most damning indictment of their "investigation" ever documented. Some of these photos appeared in LIFE (11-24-67).
- d) After all these years do you believe the man in the doorway in the Altgens photo is really Billy Lovelady? Why would the FBI take pictures of him in that striped shirt? I heard Lovelady later changed his story and said he wasn't photographed in the same shirt.

I have enclosed per your request a copy of NSAM 273 (from Assassinations: Dallas and Beyond) as well as the A&E rebroadcast of AS IT HAPPENED 11-22-63 telecast 11-22-88. If you insist on paying for this, I think \$7.50 will cover expenses. I've also included a copy of my "transcript" of this broadcast. I've marked several suspicious items that occur throughout the afternoon. You'll note the mention of several early arrests which are soon forgotten. Of course the "foreign" rifle is constantly changing. Frank McGee is troubled by a shot to the throat coming from behind. On the air, Oswald is identified about 4:25 and his life history comes flooding out very shortly after. The quality of the picture is not up usual because it is a 6 hour tape necessarily copied on that speed. It is a tremendous historical record nonetheless. I would be interested in getting your reaction to it after you've had time to see it.

What impresses me most about your work as well as Meagher's is that you both deal with the evidence. Neither of you promote far flung theories. Yes, I was able to get Presumed Guilty from my local library. I don't see how apologists like David Belin can refute the evidence that you have helped uncover.

A few more unanswered questions:

- 1) How can Connally still say he was hit by a separate bullet and yet support the official fiction? I've never understood this.
- 2) What's the story on these Secret Service agents who turned up on the grassy knoll immediately after the shooting?
- 3) What do you make of Robert Blakey's conclusion that Mafia involvement in the assassination is a "historical fact"?
- 4) Do you think Oswald was even at the Tippit murder site?
- 5) Do you think Robert Oswald wrote a book stating Lee was guilty because it was the safe thing to do?

- 6) In light of the Milteer document as well as the early November threat in Chicago, shouldn't Hoover have been well informed something was likely to happen?
- 7) Is it a proven fact that Oswald was carrying the A.J. Hidell ID's when he was arrested? I find it strange that this wasn't publicly mentioned until Saturday when they tied him into ordering the rifle.
- 8) Finally, how many shooters do you think were involved? Do you think that Clay Shaw and/or David Ferrie figured into any conspiracy?

I thank you again for your time. I hope you find this tape as interesting as I have. As my sister lives in Baltimore, maybe the next time I visit her I can swing by and if nothing else, shake your hand.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John Reese". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

John Reese

PROPOSED STATEMENT OCT. 2, 1963 (McNamara-Taylor)	ACTUAL STATEMENT OCT. 2, 1963 (White House-Kennedy)	NSAM 273 (SECRET) NOV. 26, 1963 (White House-Johnson)
The security of South Vietnam remains vital to United States security. For this reason we adhere to the overriding objective of denying this country to Communism and of supporting the Viet Cong insurgency as promptly as possible.	The security of South Vietnam is a major interest of the United States. We will adhere to our policy of working with the people and Government of South Vietnam to deny this country to communism and to suppress the externally stimulated and supported insurgency of the Viet Cong as promptly as possible. Effective performance in this undertaking is the central objective of our policy in South Vietnam.	It remains the central objective of the United States in South Vietnam to assist the people and Government of that country to win their contest against the externally directed and supported communist conspiracy. The test of all U.S. decisions and actions in this area should be the effectiveness of their contributions to this purpose. <sup>[29]</sup>

Although we are deeply concerned by repressive practices, effective performance in the conduct of the war should be the determining factor in our relations with the GVN.<sup>[29]</sup>

While such practices have not yet significantly affected the war effort, they could do so in the future.

It remains the policy of the United States, in South Vietnam as in other parts of the world, to support the efforts of the people of that country to defeat aggression and to build a peaceful and free society.<sup>[29]</sup>

Chiefs of Staff are convinced that, in keeping with the guidance NSAM 273, the United States must make plain to the enemy our determination to see the Vietnam campaign through to a favorable conclusion. To do this, we must prepare for whatever level of activity be required and, being prepared, must then proceed to take action as necessary to achieve our purposes surely and promptly.<sup>[31]</sup>

The Joint Chiefs urged the President to end "self-imposed restrictions" to go beyond planning to the implementation of CO 34A operations against the North and Laos, and in addition "conduct aerial bombing of key North Vietnam targets."

It was not only the military who drew such open-ended conclusions from the apparently "limited" wording of NSAM 273. State Department official told one Congressional committee February 1964, "the basic policy is set that we are going to stay Vietnam in a support function as long as needed to win war."<sup>[32]</sup> McNamara himself told another committee that United States had a commitment to win, rather than "support."

The survival of an independent government in South Vietnam is important . . . that I can conceive of no alternative other than to take all necessary measures within our capability to prevent a Communist victory.<sup>[33]</sup>

All of this, like the text of NSAM 273 itself, corroborates first-hand account of the November 24 meeting reported so years ago by Tom Wicker. According to that account Johnson's commitment, a message to the Saigon government, was not militantly or optimistically. The issue was clearly understood, if not the ultimate consequences:

Lodge . . . gave the President his opinion that hard decisions would be necessary to save South Vietnam. "Unfortunately, Mr. President,"

[29] Pentagon Papers (NYT/Bantam), pp. 274-275.

[30] U.S. Cong., House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Winning the Cold War: U.S. Ideological Offensive, Hearings, 88th Cong., 2nd Sess.* (Feb. 20, 1964), statement by Robert Manning, Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, p. 811.

ogy he does not even mention NSAM 273. His next citation is to the JCS directive on November 26 (which, we learn from his own Chronology and Stavins, repeats that of NSAM 273 itself), but this citation clearly begs the question of what official decision, if any, was reached on November 20. What is left of interest in the author's paragraph is the speedy authorization by the infant Johnson Administration, and the personal guidance added to the new JCS directives by the new President himself. NSAM 273, it seems clear, was an important document in the history of the 1964 escalations, as well as in the reversal of President Kennedy's late and ill-fated program of "Vietnamization" by 1965. The systematic censorship and distortion of NSAM 273 in 1963 and again in 1971, by the Pentagon study and later by the *New York Times*, raises serious questions about the *bona fides* of the Pentagon study. . . . It also suggests that the Kennedy assassination was itself an important, perhaps a crucial, event in the history of the Indochina war. . . .

[104] Stavins *et al.*, pp. 93-94; cf. USG ed., IV.C.2.a, p. viii: "NSAM 273 Authorized planning for specific covert operations, graduated in intensity, against the DRV."

## APPENDIX A

SAM 273 of November 26, 1963: a partial reconstruction of the text  
I.C.1, pp. 46-47; =  
r. III:30; Johnson,  
45  
*bject*, IV.C.1

TO: [All the senior officers of the government responsible for foreign affairs and military policy]

1. It remains the central objective of the United States in South Vietnam to assist the people and Government of that country to win their contest against the externally directed and supported communist conspiracy. The test of all U.S. decisions and actions in

*overriding objective*,  
NYT, Nov. 25, 1963,  
p. 5

IV.C.1, p. 2; = Gr.  
III:18. IV.B.3, p. 37;  
= Gr. II:276  
*objectives*, IV.B.2, p.  
26; IV.B.5, p. 67. *ob-*  
*jective*, IV.B.3, p. 37

IV.C.1, p. 3; = Gr.  
III:19

IV.C.1, p. 2; = Gr.  
III:18; Johnson, p.  
45; IV.B.5, p. 67

IV.C.1, p. 3; = Gr.  
III:18; IV.B.5, p. 67

this area should be the effectiveness of their contribution to this purpose.<sup>3</sup>

[2.] The objectives of the United States with respect to the withdrawal of U.S. military personnel remain as stated in the White House statement of October 2, 1963.

3. It is a major interest of the United States government that the present provisional government of South Vietnam should be assisted in consolidating itself in holding and developing increased public support. . . . [NYT: for programs directed toward winning the war].

[4.] The President expects that all senior officers of the government will move energetically to insure the full unity of support for established U.S. policy in South Vietnam. Both in Washington and in the field, it is essential that the government be unified. It is of particular importance that express or implied criticism of officers of other branches be assiduously avoided in all contacts with the Vietnamese government and with the press.

5. We should concentrate our efforts, and insofar as possible we should persuade the government of South Vietnam to concentrate its effort, on the critical situation in the Mekong Delta. This concentration should include not only military but economic, social, educational and informational effort. We should seek to turn the tide not only of battle but of belief, and we should seek to increase not only the controlled hamlets but the productivity of this area, especially where the proceeds can be held for the advantage of anti-Communist forces.

V.B.5, P. 67; = Gr. I:276  
V.C.1, P. 2; = Gr. II:118

[6] [Economic and military aid to the new regime should be maintained at the same levels as during Diem's rule.]  
[6.] [Both military and economic programs, it was emphasized, should be maintained at levels as high as those in the time of the Diem regime.]

Cooper, P. 224  
[Johnson . . . stressed that all military and economic programs were to be kept at the levels maintained during the Diem regime.]

V.B.3, P. 37; = Gr. I:458  
[U.S. assistance programs should be maintained at levels at least equal to those under the Diem government so that the new GVN would not be tempted to regard the U.S. as seeking to disengage.]

C.2.a, P. viii; = III:117  
[7?] [NSAM 273 Authorized planning for specific covert operations, graduated in intensity, against the DRV.]

vins, pp. 94-95  
vins, P. 93; = Gr. I:141; cf. IV.C.2.a, 2  
[NSAM 273 authorized Krulak to form a committee and develop a coherent program of covert activities to be conducted during 1964, while the rest of the national security apparatus explored the feasibility of initiating a wider war against the North. . . . This NSAM provided that] . . . planning should include different levels of possible increased activity, and in each instance there should be estimates of such factors as:

- a. Resulting damage to NVN;
- b. The plausibility of denial;
- c. Possible NVN retaliation;
- d. Other international reaction.

3.5. P. xxxiv (sup- sed); = Gr. II: [Clandestine operations against the North and into Laos are authorized.]

5. P. 67; = Gr. I:16  
[And in conclusion, plans were requested for clandestine operations by the GVN against the North and also for operations up to 50 kilometers into Laos.]

Gr. III:141

[8?] [The directive also called for a plan, to be submitted for approval, for military operations] "up to a line up to 50 km. inside Laos, together with political plans for minimizing the international hazards of such an enterprise" (NSAM 273).

V.B.3, P. 37; = Gr. II:458  
[Military operations should be initiated, under close political control, up to within fifty kilometers inside of Laos.]

IV.B.5, P. 67; = Gr. II:276; = NYT/Bantam, P. 233  
[9?] [As a justification for such measures, State was directed to develop a strong, documented case] "to demonstrate to the world the degree to which the Viet Cong is controlled, sustained, and supplied from Hanoi, through Laos and other channels."

Johnson, P. 45  
[The NSAM also assigned various specific actions to the appropriate department or agency of government.]

### APPENDIX B

Clues to the existence on November 24, 1963, of a White House paraphrase of NSAM 273 (paragraphs 1 to 4) for press purposes.

Both the *New York Times*<sup>1</sup> and *Washington Post*,<sup>2</sup> referring in customary terms to a White House source or sources, printed paraphrases of NSAM 273's first (i.e., more innocuous and misleading) page, and these paraphrases share certain divergences from the official text. These shared divergences suggest the existence of an intermediary written archetype, a background paper for the use of certain preferred correspondents. (The *Times* paraphrase was printed in a story by E. W. Kenworthy, who later helped write and edit the *New York Times/Bantam Pentagon Papers*.)

<sup>1</sup> NYT, November 25, 1963, P. 5.  
<sup>2</sup> Washington Post, November 25, 1963, A2.

**SAMPLE DIVERGENCES:**

- NSAM 273(1) It remains the central objective of the United States
- Washington Post central point of United States policy remains
- New York Times central point of United States policy remains
- NSAM 273(1) contribution to this purpose
- Washington Post directed toward that objective
- New York Times contribution to this overriding objective
- NSAM 273(4) senior officers . . . move . . . to insure the full unity of support
- Washington Post all Government agencies . . . complete unity of purpose
- New York Times All agencies . . . full unity of purpose

The press reports of this paraphrase suggest that the closing words of NSAM 273(3), as quoted in USG ed, IV.C.3 (p. 3), may have been suppressed: and that the increased "public support" referred to was not in fact political but military:

NYT, November 25, 1963, p. 5: "development of public support for programs directed toward winning the war."  
 San Francisco Chronicle (AP and UPI), November 25, 1963, p. 5: "to develop public support for its policies aimed at winning the war against the Communist Viet Cong."  
 Los Angeles Times, November 25, 1963, p. 6: "development of programs to oppose the Viet Cong."  
 AP, as quoted by Peking Radio, November 25, 1963 (FBIS Daily Report, November 26, 1963, BBB4): "consolidate its position and win public support for the policy mapped out by it, in order to win the war against the Vietnamese Communists."  
 NSAM 273(3), as quoted in USG ed, IV.C.1, p. 3: "the present provisional government of South Vietnam should be assisted in consolidating itself in holding and developing increased public support."

## ASSASSINATIONS AND DOMESTIC SURVEILLANCE

### Peter Dale Scott

1975

Events since the Kennedy assassination have alerted us to the possibility of illicit collaboration between members of Army Intelligence and the Secret Service. In 1970 the Washington Star reported that "plainclothes military intelligence agents played a questionable—and still secret—surveillance role at the 1968 national conventions" in Chicago, where the Secret Service admitted borrowing agents from the Illinois-based 119th Intelligence Group (Washington Star, Dec. 2, 1970, A-8). These borrowed "security" forces conducted extensive domestic intelligence operations, and there were rumors of provocations as well. In 1972 there were similar rumors about the 1972 party conventions and the 111th Intelligence Group in Miami, where one provocateur (Pablo Fernandez) was said to be a former CIA agent working with Watergate burglar E. Howard Hunt (Nation, October 1, 1973, p. 297; Saturday Review-World, September 11, 1973, p. 28 [supra, pp. 392-406]). What we know from these later disturbances suggests that it is now common practice for the Secret Service, whose local offices are scantily staffed, to augment their staff for special events with auxiliary personnel from military Intelligence and other sources.

Quite by accident, we know that the Dallas Secret Service recruited thirty men from the Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce Sports Committee (of whom the informant at least was a former Army Air Force Intelligence officer) to "assist the Secret Service at the breakfast for President Kennedy" on November 22 (18 H 691). In Dallas, where Adlai Stevenson had been attacked only one month earlier, one would have expected the Secret Service, which gave "special attention" to this event (2 H 108), to recruit even more such auxiliaries. Yet the reports and testimony of