

Dear Mr. Reese,

10/22/90

The questions you ask reflect the widespread influence on caring people of the irresponsible and theoretical works on the political assassinations of authors who for the most part intend well but are entirely lost to reality.

1. Penn Jones may have originated the baseless notion that LBJ had foreknowledge of the JFK assassination. There is no special moratorium on selected exhibits and a much larger volume of withheld records relating to the JFK assassination ~~were~~ never seen by the Warren Commission.

There isn't even a legitimate reason to suspect that LBJ had any foreknowledge.

There was no special law or regulation promulgated to withhold any of the Commission's evidence. There is a law long on the books, intended to protect the innocent, that prohibits the disclosure of official information for 75 years if that information can be hurtful to the innocent. This applies to the Commission exhibits and the agency records. In addition, there are seven exemptions to the Freedom of Information Act under which records are withheld, not infrequently by phony official claims to them, particularly true of "national defense" and "confidential sources." I'm not now certain but I think that Mark Lane started this canard based on his misinterpretation of something Earl Warren said. Warren had the standing law in mind, not suppression he or anyone else on the Commission ordered and nobody had any such authority.

2. I don't remember the Cutler/Morris work, Alias Oswald. If this is similar to Michael Eddowes' concoction that someone was substituted for the real Oswald in the USSR, it is baseless and was proven to be wrong by exhumation and examination of the buried Oswald corpse.

3. Lifton's book is correct only when he reports as his own derring-do what had been published many years earlier by others, mostly by me, as you'll see when you read my books. The only thing original in his book is his theory, which is entirely untenable, that the body was kidnapped and altered. There was no helicopter to take the body to Walter Reed, the one he refers to as the second helicopter having been sent, to his knowledge, from Fort Myer with the Presidential Guard. It assisted in removing the casket from the plane and they ~~it~~ flew, in that helicopter, to the Navy hospital in Bethesda. There was no second ambulance in which to spirit the corpse away. The second ambulance, as Lifton knew from Manchester, who he quotes, held the cardiologist sent in the event LBJ had another heart attack. It was impossible to use the back gate to the Navy hospital, through which Lifton claims this second ambulance entered, because as soon as it was known the corpse was coming there it was locked and the guard was removed so that nobody could pull rank and order a guard to open it. This was done as a crowd-security measure. I could go on and on with such detail, but even the FBI's O'Neill-Sibert report, which he misinterprets and fabricates so much from, is quite explicit that there was no body bag and that it was the body as it left Dallas.

4. Because there never was any real investigation of it we don't really know how Jack Ruby got into the basement at police headquarters. There is reason to believe that it was not via either garage entrance and could have been from elsewhere in the building, to which he had had daily access. I think that Penn Jones started the yarn that the man later chief of police took him down on the elevator.

5. To say that I am not very fond of Mark Lane is to put it mildly. With regard to Executive Action, on which his collaborator was Don Freed, they cribbed that from the phony book by the French Intelligence, SDECE, originally titled L'Amerique Brule and retitled at Jim Garrison's suggestion, Farewell America. Lane had a xerox, prior to the printing in Europe, via Garrison, as I also did.

6. You ask how I think the country would react if the truth was ever revealed. I doubt that will ever happen because the crime itself was never officially investigated. So there is no truth to be officially revealed by the government. I doubt that today

or in the future any confessions would be believed. But because of all the misinformation and disinformation that has been spread so widely, it will be difficult if not impossible to persuade the major media that it is not more of the stuff to which you have been subjected. It has already persuaded some to ignore everything that is alleged, no matter how true, and to persuade the rest not to look at it because it is just more of the same crap.

This is the great harm, further one of them and a lingering one, done by the Liftons, the Janes and their kind. But if and when truth is established, I do not think the reaction will be revolution, disbelief or indifference. The people, or most, have never been indifferent and today, judging from my mail and book orders, there is much more interest than say five years ago. When you ask if I believe that anything of substance will be revealed in 2029, I presume you mean after the 75 years. I believe not as it relates to the assassination itself because that was never really investigated. Much more remains withheld than is necessary or than is required to be under reasonable interpretation of law and regulation, but I have no reason to believe that any of it relates to the actualities of the crime.

I don't remember being interviewed for any documentary cabled by ABC, Who Killed Martin Luther King and I don't remember seeing it. I do remember very well helping Gerard Selby with his magnificent documentary on the JFK assassination that was aired by ABC. It was his master's thesis when he was a student at the University of Maryland. If you have a cassette I'd like to borrow it, of *the King documentary*

If you are again subjected to the kind of worse than awful nonsense your letter reflects, I suggest you ask yourself two basic questions, is what is alleged reasonable and if you conclude that it might be, then ask if it was possible. With regard to Lifton's theory and junk like it, as did it or could it have served the alleged purpose. The quick answer to the fabrication that the body was altered and with that the X-rays and films were fakes, why in the world would anybody go to all that trouble and run such enormous risks only to evolve X-rays and photos that themselves destroy the official "solution."

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg
Harold Weisberg

October 18, 1990

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

Dear Mr. Weisberg:

Thank you very much for your prompt reply. I tend to agree with your conclusions on the Ricky White affair. I find it interesting that The New York Times did not cover the story at all. If you would, I would like your opinions on the following items:

- 1) Do you feel, as Penn Jones and others apparently do, that LBJ had foreknowledge of the event? Is he actually responsible for the 75 year moratorium on selected exhibits? Is there any precedent for this act?
- 2) Are you familiar with the Cutler/Morris work Alias Oswald? The whole idea of substitution seems preposterous, but the photographic and fingerprint data is most fascinating if not conclusive to me.
- 3) Do you think David Lifton's Best Evidence is correct? From what he has uncovered, I think there almost had to be some kind of wound alterations made. My question is where was this done?
- 4) How did Ruby get into the basement to shoot Oswald? Did he ride down an elevator with Charles Batchelor?
- 5) What was your reaction to Executive Action (the movie)? I take it, from your comments in The NY Times in the mid-70's that you're not too fond of Mark Lane.
- 6) Finally, how do you think the country would react if the truth ever was revealed? Revolution? Disbelief? Indifference? Do you think anything of substance will be revealed in the year 2039? I will be 87 then and I suppose at this date this event will be on the front burner as much as McKinley's shooting is now.

I forgot to mention in the previous letter that I was much impressed with your contributions to A&E's documentary Who Killed Martin Luther King. Shows like this are like a voice in the wilderness. Again, thanks very much for your time and consideration. My order form is enclosed.

Sincerely yours,


John Reese