

5/25/75

Dear Tom, *Jusman*

Another of those matters I want to inform you about is the fact of the Belin/Rockefeller Commission examination of the JFK autopsy material, the circumstances and my opinion.

From what I have gathered, without making any investigation but from dependable sources and connected with Dallas, the only real "investigation" other than hearing from witnesses in secret has related to the JFK assassination. This has as its excuse the wild and irresponsible charges made mostly but not exclusively by Dick Gregory and Ralph Schoenman.

There has been a major effort, with the FBI, to build an entirely unnecessary and in every way enormously excessive case against fictions like the so-called "tramp" pictures on which no work at all was necessary; the wrong claims made for the Zapruder film alone, that is, divorced for other evidence; and even questioning of Dallas cops and former Jack Ruby strippers as recently as a few days ago, after it was reported that the entire investigation was completed and the report was being completed.

As was done under Ramsey Clark years ago a partisan panel of experts was appointed to make an examination of the autopsy material, including what is covered by the letter agreement between Burke Marshall and GSA.

A young friend has engaged the Archives in correspondence of this. He has sent me a copy of their replies to his questions, by James O'Neill, Acting Archivist, stamp dated May 14, 1975.

As they relate to Marshall this letter says:

"Mr. Burke Marshall was notified that the proposed examination was to be made, and he did not object or specifically agree to the examination." (Page 1)

"The provisions of the deed of gift for a determination by Mr. Burke Marshall of the qualifications of those who wish to examine the autopsy materials applies only to private researchers." (Page 2.)

This panel's "examination occurred on April 18, 1975, for about six hours." Of this time it "spent about an hour and a half reviewing the Zapruder slides." In addition it studied the Zapruder film but "No arrangements were made or requested for viewing the Zapruder film in slow motion."

What this means is that not counting the time spent on the movie, which leaves even less time for it, the panel spent less than four and a half hours on the other evidence. One member, Dr. Olivier, didn't stay for all of that. In my opinion it is not possible to understand the movie without using slow motion.

The Rockefeller Commission "requested" only of the pictures of JFK's clothing those "published by the Warren Commission or the FBI." (This can be quite important in the future, as I'll explain if there is need.)

The panel also spent time with the other movies, the whole bullet and fragments "the autopsy report, the 'memorandum of transfer' ...President Kennedy's clothing..." It "was furnished copies of the deed of gift..." Why it wanted this for any non-propaganda purpose I can't imagine but I am reminded of the large anti-Kennedy campaign most recently in the form of leaks of plots against Castro during the JFK administration only when authenticated ones began under Eisenhower and Nixon. I do not see any other need for this kind of panel to even read the memo of transfer. Particularly not if it had serious evidentiary interests. And, any examination of this stuff further reduced the time available for study of the actual evidence.

Belin and Robert Olson, general counsel, were both present. All the reports are that Olson was in charge of the Dallas operations.

What can be the purposes of this kind of operation when the Rockefeller/Commission's mandate is to investigate the CIA?

~~Was~~ there was no need for the hoked-up work with the "tramp" pictures, so also was there none with any of the autopsy material. There exists an official study, made by the Clark panel, and its conclusions ~~are~~ ^{are} that any inquiry of legitimate interests needs. It would be adequate to state that under the direction of the then Attorney General a panel of eminent experts concluded that...had nothing else.

But once I shook loose that 1/27/64 transcript and later that of 1/22/64 and especially with what I did with the first and with what Ford did with it and made it all public, there developed potentially the most serious political problems for Ford and his whitewasher Belin (on whom there is an incredible story the press has had no interest in).

It is not merely that the Rockefeller Commission can select the most irrational of the wildest charges against the CIA and now say we~~h~~ have examined them and they merely prove that the CIA is accused of original sin. This will balance nicely with an admission of some of the charges already public against the CIA and perhaps some it can be considered the Church committee will have to deal with. It is not merely a contrived defense of the CIA.

Belin is a virtual psychopath about the Warren Report. ^{He} cannot control himself or what he is driven to say. Whatever a shrink would say of this I'm telling you that he, personally, faked and suppressed evidence - both - without which it could not even be alleged that Oswald was at the scene of either crime. All the credible evidence is that he was not and could not have been.

Remember that in the course of ripping off and selling that 1/27/64 top secret transcript for profit the same Ford who now appoints the same Belin to "investigate" the CIA also then deleted every adverse reference to it without indicating any editing and actually pretending there had been none.

In this context I suggest the only real purpose that can be served by these totally unnecessary investigations are anti-Kennedy, pro-Warren Commission and pro-Ford and Belin. These investigations can help the FBI a little too. But they are not part of an investigation of the CIA and not necessary in either a defense of it against unfair charges or an overt whitewash.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg