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March 7, 1975

Vice President Nelson Rockefeller  
Commission on CIA Activities Within the United States  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. Vice President:

I write you concerning recent news stories relating to your Commission's investigation of matters relating to the assassination of President Kennedy. I am deeply disturbed by the implications of the information I am receiving and would like to pose several questions to you to help clear the air.

1. For six hours on April 18, 1975 a panel of experts accompanied by Mr. David Belin, Executive Director of the Commission, examined the Kennedy autopsy pictures and X-rays and related materials at the National Archives. Lt. Col. Robert R. McMeekin, a member of that panel, has since told the Associated Press that "the purpose of the examination was to determine whether the fatal head shot could have been fired from the front and not the rear."

Is Col. McMeekin correct in his statement about the purpose of the panel examination? Was this the sole purpose? If not, could you please tell me exactly what the purpose was?

2. If the purpose was solely to determine the possible source of the fatal head shot, could you tell me why the panel also examined the President's clothing, a bullet labeled Commission Exhibit 399, and X-rays of Governor Connally?

3. Your commission was appointed to ascertain and "evaluate any facts relating to activities conducted within the United States by the Central Intelligence Agency that give rise to questions as to whether the agency has exceeded its statutory authority." Could you please tell me how an examination of the Kennedy autopsy and related materials falls within your Commission's jurisdiction as outlined in President Ford's executive order establishing the Commission?

4. Was any testimony taken during the panel's examination on April 18, 1975, and, if so, how was it recorded? Also, have any depositions or other testimony been taken from any of the panel members prior or subsequent to April 18, 1975, and if so, when?

If any such testimony has been transcribed, I would like to obtain a copy of it. Do you plan to publish it, or must I arrange to obtain Xerox copies of the transcripts?

Has the panel submitted any form of written report relating to its examination, including but not limited to notes made during the examination? If so, I would like to obtain copies of any such material.

5. Could you tell me which members of your investigative staff are working on matters relating to the assassination of President Kennedy, whether this has been isolated as a separate area of inquiry, and approximately how much of the Commission's time has been spent investigating that area?

6. On several occasions, including March 1, 1975, March 7, 1975, April 4, 1975, and April 15, 1975, Mr. Belin has made public statements to the effect that Lee Harvey Oswald was the lone assassin of President Kennedy and that your Commission had received no evidence challenging that view. Were any of these statements by Mr. Belin authorized or approved in advance, and has Mr. Belin ever been admonished or asked to refrain from making such comments as a violation of the Commission's stated policy not to comment on its investigation while in progress?

Furthermore, in reference to Mr. Belin's statements that your Commission has adduced no evidence challenging the Warren Report conclusion that Oswald was the sole assassin, would you tell me if your Commission has undertaken to investigate whether Oswald was the sole assassin or to adduce evidence on that point? Has your Commission ever determined whether such investigation is within its jurisdiction and if so, what was that determination?

7. Mr. George O'Toole has released to the public a four-page single-spaced letter written to Mr. Bernard Fensterwald, Jr., on Commission stationery, asking 12 questions relating to Oswald's role in the deaths of President Kennedy and Officer Tippit, and Mr. O'Toole's book on the assassination. Was this an official request by Mr. Belin on behalf of the Commission? Was this letter written by Mr. Belin during the time for which he is paid to work for the Commission?

I ask these questions both as a concerned citizen and a researcher who has spent several years investigating President Kennedy's assassination and its official "investigations." I hope that you will voluntarily respond to my questions. However, if for any reason there is a decision to deny me the information I seek, I would like these requests treated as requests made pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. §552 (1974). Accordingly, I would want to know the specific reasons for withholding under the FOIA.

Thanking you in advance for your efforts, I remain

Sincerely,

Howard Roffman  
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