

Howard Weisberg
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Frederick, MD 21701

July 16, 1991

Dear Harold,

I have been an admirer of your work for years. I have most, if not all of your books, including all four of the Frame-Up Kennedy assassination books (among my collection of 130+ JFK books.

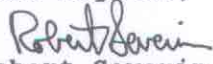
I am doing some research on James Earl Ray aka Eric Starvo Galt aka John Willard aka Paul Bridgeman aka aRamon George sneyd. I have read Tennessee Waltz, but it leaves questions unanswered. My main question is regarding the trip Ray took to the Portugese embassy in London. Was he trying to get a visa to Angola with the intent of linking up with mercenary groups? Were they supposed to help him evade the "largest manhunt in history"?

Is there any resolution to the aliases listed above? The Murkin Conspiracy does not resolve this issue, and makes you sound like you have no conclusions. Is your book still available? If so, please let me know how much it costs. I would like to know if you would be able to provide me some other research materials for a paper I intend to write on the above issues. Thank you very much in advance for your cooperation. I will be glad to pay copying fees for research papers, where they touch on these issues. Is all your information from the same sources Melanson found in his book?

Do you believe that "Raoul" existed, or is he a composite of secret contacts that Ray will not discuss? Was Kimble Raoul? Weren't Ray's brothers involved in almost all of Ray's endeavors?

Wasn't King's body lifted off the floor and thrown against the balcony doors before he fell, proving ballistically that the shot came from below? Is there medical evidence of the bullet track?

Best Regards,


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7/21/91

Dear Robert Severin

It is not easy for me to respond to letters like yours of the 16th because I do not want to give offense and because it reflects that your knowledge of the subject matter comes from a variety of incompetent and undependable sources as a result of which you have nothing straight at all. The reader is the captive of the author when he reads a book by anyone who seems to have proper academic credentials, like a PhD in political science, because the reader has every reason to believe that the author knows what he is talking about. But in the case of Melanson what he has not taken from others and not infrequently without credit and frequently twisting and distorting it, he just made up and he did that in a way that would discredit a reasonable intelligent high school kid.

For just two examples of the later, there isn't a word of truth in the Kimble story. He made it all up. He did the same with the JFK assassination. He had no connection with the CIA, either, and besides, not even a penny dreadful would pretend that any intelligence agency would survive working the way Melanson made up. Now ~~that~~ ^{with} regard to some of your specifics, Ray did not go to the Portugese embassy in London. He was not trying to get to Angola at all. It was to what then was called Rhodesia. That was not to link up with any mercenary groups there. His later effort to make such a connection with any such groups was a final act of desperation: he was broke. Because there was no such connection it could not have helped him "evade the 'largest manhunt in history'," your quote coming from the FBI's propoganda, and if he had had any help at all he'd have gotten away. He was about \$100 short of passage to Rhodesia from Lisbon.

As a further example of how you were deceived, what little contact with reality there is in Melanson's book comes from records he knew I got via FOIA lawsuits. I got nothing from him. He credits the FBI reading room ^{and} what he lacked honesty to credit to me. This includes the dirty trick he played on you and others with his fiction about the "fat man" having to have his name withheld to save his life. The name was known publicly and in one of those FBI records Melanson got from me he knew the name was McDouglton and public-like in the FBI's reading room! In short, there is nothing that can reasonable be called "information" in Melanson's book.

Ray's brothers were not involved with him in any way and aside from official fictions no reason even to suspect that they were. King's body was not lifted off the floor and thrown against any doors and ballistically there is no proof of the shot's direction. Are you beginning to wonder whether you should write anything on the subject? I'm sorry I can't do any searching for you. I'm 78, have a number of serious illnesses, and cannot search for myself. There is "medical evidence of the bullet track" but it was deflected by bone so that does not permit tracing it to a source. a list of our books is enclosed. Best wishes, Harold Weisberg

Harold Weisberg