

*Orig under Autopsy. Copies sent Arch WWS, Adm Office, & D.D.,
Gaby & Paul*

11/24/63

Mr. Thomas J. Kelley
Assistant Director
U.S. Secret Service
Washington, D.C. 20226

Dear Mr. Kelley,

Dr. Rhoads has forwarded your letter of the 3rd and its enclosures. Although this is in sharp contradiction to the existing record, I do assure you I welcome this, am grateful for it, and want very much to believe it marks a shift to a new and proper policy. I hope you will review the earlier file and correct any other errors.

Some questions remain. I write in an effort to get the answers.

You say "we do not have" copies of the two receipts of 11/22/63 (one may be 11/23/63) for the sheet, drapes and shroud and for the photographic materials. - believe these papers were directed to you. Can you obtain copies for me from whomever you gave them to, or can you direct me to them? These receipts certainly must exist within the government.

Part of the certificate of death is illegible. Are the words after "immediate cause" "Gunshot of Brain"? After SSA, what is the signature?

Rather than a "letter" from Captain Stover "concerning laws and regulations regarding the confidential nature of the events" there is an unaddressed memorandum from him which deals with neither. I can understand that under the circumstances the language may have been imprecise, but I am asking is this memo the letter referred to or is there something else?

The archives cannot identify for me the "missile" for which the FBI agents signed a receipt. They suggest 32843, which is not a single object but seems to be not fewer than three tiny fragments the largest of which would hardly be called a "missile". Yet there is the receipt for but one object. Can you identify this "missile" for me in the evidence and do you know of any other similar receipts, including for what the 1968 panel report describes as a "rectangular structure"?

The 11/25/63 letter to Admiral Burkley from Dr. Kemp Clark was removed by the Warren Commission when it published the accompanying "summary". Can you tell me why, if you know, and the source of what was substituted in the Report and in Exhibit 392? Was this done before the document reached the Commission, if you know?

Existing official accounts of the photographic materials are inconsistent and contradictory. This is one of the reasons I seek the receipt for them. Have you any list or tabulation of them and can you account for the reported damages?

Sincerely,

Herold Weisberg

11/24/69

Dr. James B. Woods
Archivist of the United States
The National Archives
Washington, D.C. 20540

Dear Mr. Woods,

Such as I welcome your two letters of November 18, there are several comments they compel of me.

First of all, they prove the point I have made repeatedly without meaningful response from your agency, that there is the most essential evidence of the assassination in the possession of the government and not transferred to your agency as directed by the former Attorney General. This puts the government in the position of violating its own executive order, persisting in the violation after it has been called to official attention, and of suppressing evidence of the President's murder. Mr. Clark directed that everything be placed in the Archives and made available, and he was specific in declaring the national interest requires it.

The kind of self-serving error that has become all too common is repeated. You say, "We do not have a list of records relating to David W. Ferrie, nor has such a list been previously furnished you." At the time the late David Ferrie figured in the New Orleans news for the first time, Mr. Johnson did, in fact, in advance of press inquiry, prepare such a list. He told me he had done this in order to meet the anticipated inquiry from the press, and he did give me a two-part list. One part contained those documents not withheld, the other those withheld. In any event, I would appreciate a list of all withheld Ferrie documents, including the reason for withholding in each case.

To the best of my recollection, you have never responded to my comment on your regular employment of evasive language, twice reported in a single paragraph of your longer letter. You refer to what is "known to be among the records of the Warren Commission". Your archive consists of documents coming from other sources. One example is pertinent to the cited executive order. When I request research materials of your agency, it is not essential that they come from the files transferred by the late Commission and I do not care if they are in other files. It is unfortunately the case that some of the most vital information was never in the Commission's possession, hence cannot be in their files. As a consequence of this withholding of information from the Commission by the executive branch, we now find agencies making the spurious claim that what they suppressed can be suppressed in perpetuity because it is "investigative files for law-enforcement purposes", a complete fiction. For the Commission had no such purposes or powers. So, I renew my request for what you have not provided me if this data is contained in other files in your custody than those of the Warren Commission.

However, I must acknowledge that Mr. Kelley's November 3 letter represents a fine if belated step toward rectifying what I would have hoped you would by now have found an intolerable condition. I regret it is of limited application, was not spontaneous or in compliance with the executive order, and follows blatant misrepresentations to me.

I appreciate your references to 07:284, of which I would like a copy, and to 08307, page 4. The second reference, however, introduces confusion, for it describes not a "miscel" but "two small irregularly shaped fragments" 7x2 and 3x1 mm in dimension. These are not described in the provided receipt. Moreover, this exhibit says the receipt for the two fragments is "attached", and it is not. If you can provide the receipt said to have been attached, I would also like it. In addition, 08343 seems to show not fewer than three fragments.

The concluding paragraph of this letter departs from reality and ignores a rather long letter I wrote very long ago on precisely this point. If there was ever any doubt that I went and asked for everything on the autopsy, this letter eliminated that. As a matter of fact, I have several times asked you when I could expect meaningful response to questions I raised in that correspondence that to this day have never been addressed, by you or anyone else. I discussed this with you personally, in Judge Helleck's court, I have raised the question with Mr. Johnson and rather pointedly told him I do want everything on the autopsy and he did tell me everything had been provided. As a matter of fact, in the late summer of 1967 I went into this with him in some detail because two pertinent reports had been segregated from a file and were withheld from me whereas the rest of the file had been released for research. I then told him I had completed the draft of a book on the autopsy and wanted everything for it.

This raises several other unanswered requests of similar character. I have asked why and how these two reports were denied me and still denied me even after the date on which they were promised when they had been made available to an author writing in favor of the government's position and were in a book he had published six months earlier. I have also asked, without response, if what I was written about Carlos Bringuier and Oswald's Marine handbook is really an answer to my request for a single page of it. You told me the book had been returned to Bringuier, but you have never answered my question, had this or other pages been copied from it prior to its return? We know some of it was copied, for the Commission published it - long after return of the book itself.

The receipt from which I had made request for what you have just provided refers to a November 28, 1963 "letter" described as "concerning laws and regulations". What you have sent is an undressed memorandum which makes no reference to "laws and regulations regarding the confidential nature of the events." I recognize that language can be employed loosely, but I would like the assurance the memorandum sent is what the receipt refers to and that there is no such letter, if it can be offered.

Sincerely yours,

Harold Weisberg



THE DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
UNITED STATES SECRET SERVICE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20524

November 3, 1963

Dr. James B. Rhoads
Archivist of the United States
National Archives Building
Washington, D. C.

Dear Dr. Rhoads:

Mr. Harold Weisberg has forwarded to us a copy of the letter he sent to you on October 17, and its enclosure showing certain items in which he was interested.

To facilitate your reply to him, we thought perhaps the following enclosures taken from our files might be of assistance to you.

Copy of the Certificate of Death which was filed in Texas.

Copy of letter, dated November 26, 1963, from Commanding Officer, U. S. Naval Medical School, concerning laws and regulations regarding the confidential nature of the events.

The original and six pink copies of Certificate of Death (NAVMED N).

Copy of receipt from FBI for a missile recovered during the examination of the body.

Copy of a letter, dated November 22, 1963, from Dr. M. T. Jenkins, Department of Anesthesiology of the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School, subject: Statement

Dr. James B. Rhoads - 2 - 11-3-69

concerning resuscitative efforts for President John F. Kennedy; together with the letter of November 23, 1963, from Dr. Kemp Clark and the summary of his findings of treatment and examination of the President in the Dallas County Hospital.

We do not have a copy of the "receipt dated November 22, 1963, for bed sheet, surgical drapes, and shroud used to cover the body in transit," or the "receipt dated November 22, 1963, regarding a carton of photographic film, undeveloped except for X-rays, delivered to PRS for safekeeping."

We hope you find these enclosures helpful in your contacts with Mr. Weisberg.

Very truly yours,


Thomas J. Kelley
Assistant Director

Enclosures