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10/7/97

Dear Wayne,

Having heard nothing since my letter of a month or so ago relating to you/
idea for a Vanity Fair story by Ann Louise Hardack I assume you did not like it
and did not pass it on, she did not like it, or Vanity Fair didn't. I had recom-
mended instead of a rehash of what has been done before without much effect a
story about a major, an unprecedented scandal in our history and that relating to
what is inevitably a coup de'etat, intended or de facto.

I am aware of the Beschloss incomplete scholarship he finds profitable, The
Johnson Tapes, and of the Newsweek condensation, with key dates omitted.

Consistent with an aspect of what I believe is a major scandal Newsweek
altered entirely the meaning of what Russell told LBJ. I enclose that page of
Newsweek and the transcribed tape that I've had for months, both highlighted.

The obvious and explicit fact is that Russell believe he had forced a
modification in the language of the Report "to say that there was a difference in
the Commission on that," the single-bullet myth.


This is only part of the scandal that I have fully documented, and it again
suggests a knowing coup, with official agreement to cover it up. I am not up to
going into all of that now. I was up at Hopkins yesterday for the regular
cardiovascular check of the legs and the trip alone tires me excessively.

I have a news and magazine background but it is of so long ago I do not
claim it relates to today's realities, but I do say that by traditional American
concepts what I have in mind is important journalism that should, with attention
given it, cause a strong reaction.

I did not phone Hardack because I avoid toll charges. My monthly medicine
bills run from \$750 up I want for neither me nor Hil to become a public charge.

The APs story in the local papers was fairly honest as was the first radio
treatment of the Beschloss, before daylight yesterday on ^{CBS} ~~ABC~~. After that the
little I could take in was anti-Castro. With no dates given. From the records I
have LBJ began by preaching a USSR conspiracy, his means of twisting Warren's
arm to get him to do what Warren knew and said he should not do, take the job.

To the best of my knowledge LBJ got off on his irrational Castro kick as the
result of the FBI's effort after the Eisenhower/CIA/ Mafia plot was exposed. It
was not and Johnson knew it was not a JFK plot.

Best,

Harold Weisberg

Was he ever in [Ruby's] bar?
HOOVER: There was a story that [Oswald] had been in the strip-tease joint that he had ... We've tied Oswald into this Cuban Fair Play Committee, which is financed, to some extent, by the Castro government.

LBJ: How many shots were fired? Three?

HOOVER: Three.

LBJ: Any of them fired at me?

HOOVER: No ... All three at the president ... He was hit by the first and third. The second shot hit the governor.

Hoover's report clashes with the later official version that one bullet missed, another pierced Kennedy's throat and struck Texas Gov. John Connally and a third fractured Kennedy's skull. Johnson and Hoover go on to speak as if the gunman were firing from in front, with Connally obscuring his view of JFK.

LBJ: Would the president've got hit with the second one ... if Connally hadn't been in his way?

HOOVER: Oh, yes, yes, the president would no doubt have been hit.

No date
 Johnson suspects that Cuban leader Fidel Castro was a player in Kennedy's murder. But, as he says on the tapes, if Americans blame Castro or Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev, the country could demand a retaliatory attack upon Cuba or the Soviet Union and "check us into a war that can kill 40 million Americans in an hour." In September 1964, Johnson's old patron, Sen. Richard Russell of Georgia, a reluctant member of the Warren Commission, complains to LBJ that he has been forced against his will to sign its report that one of the shots fired hit both Kennedy and Connally. LBJ concedes that he also privately doubts the official version that a single gunman acted alone.

Dis honest excerpting
RUSSELL: I'm just worn out, fighting over that damned report ... They're trying to prove that the same bullet that hit Kennedy first was the one that hit Connally, went through him and through his hand, his bone, and into his leg ... Well, I don't believe it.

LBJ: I don't either.

RUSSELL: If a fellow was accurate enough to hit Kennedy right in the neck in one shot and knock his head off in the next one—and he's leaning up against his wife's head—and not even wound her, why, he didn't miss completely with that shot.



LBJ privately believed that a foreign conspiracy killed Kennedy

Johnson's suspicions that Castro was behind Kennedy's murder gain new force in February 1967. He tells his attorney general, Ramsey Clark, that he cannot believe what he has just been told about the Kennedy administration's assassination attempts against the Cuban leader.

Fiction
LBJ: It's incredible! ... They have a man that was ... instructed by the CIA and the attorney general [Robert Kennedy] to assassinate Castro after the Bay of Pigs ... They had these pills and they were supposed to take 'em [if Castro] caught 'em. And they didn't get to take their pills. So he tortured 'em and they told him all about it ... So ... he called Oswald and a group in and told them ... "Go ... get the job done" ... It sounded just like your telling me that Lady Bird was taking dope.

A Chat With Jackie

A July 4, 1964, call from the LBJ Ranch to Jacqueline Kennedy at Hyannis Port.

LBJ: I've been out in a boat. I got a sunburn, and I'll ... be blistered now.

JK: You'll look marvelous with a sunburn.

LBJ: ... Lynda's with us. Luci's in Washington having dates.

JK: I noticed she didn't come. I thought it was something sinister like that.

LBJ: She said that she wanted a very special birthday present. She just wanted to go one whole day without a [Secret Service] agent. What do you reckon happened? ...

JK: [laughs] I'd hate to think! And don't you!

No date

The Road to Vietnam

Vietnam looms over LBJ's presidency from the start. February 1964: Johnson complains to Miami publisher John Knight that withdrawing now could unleash a "Who lost China?"-style campaign of Republican vengeance that could cost him the 1964 election. Still he shows that he knows, even this early, that it will be very difficult to win a conventional war that far from American shores.

LBJ: Run and let the dominoes start falling over—and God Almighty, what they said about us leaving China would just be warming up ... I see [Richard]

Nixon is raising hell about it today. [Arizona Sen. Barry] Goldwater too ...

KNIGHT: ... I hope we don't get involved in anything full-scale ... Long-range over there, the odds are certainly against us.

LBJ: ... Any time you got that many people against you that far from your home base, it's bad.

Johnson suggests to Defense Secretary Robert McNamara in March that perhaps it should try to educate Americans about war in Asia.

LBJ: Do you think it's a mistake to explain ... Vietnam, and what we're faced with?
McNAMARA: I do think it would be wise for you to say as little as possible ... The sign I see coming through the cables are disturbing ... Poor morale in Vietnamese forces ... A tremendous amount of coup planning.

May 27, 1964: As Johnson says on the Joint Chiefs of Staff are pounding him "get in or get out" of Vietnam. He asks sell, the Senate Armed Services chair how important South Vietnam is to America's world position.

RUSSELL: It isn't important a damn bit, all these new missile systems.

LBJ: I guess it's important ... from the standpoint that ... if we don't pay any attention to this [SEATO] treaty [committing the U.S. to South Vietnam's defense] don't guess they think we pay attention any of them ... I don't think the people the country know much about Vietnam and I think they care a hell of a lot less. We tell Khrushchev, we send China

Transcript of Phone Conversation Between LBJ and
Senator Richard Russell on 9/18'64

LBJ: Hello

RR: Yes, sir.

LBJ: Well your always leaving town. You must not like it up here.

RR: Well you left. I figured if you got out of town that the country could get along a whole lot better without me then it could you.

LBJ: I don't know.

RR: So I got out. No, that damn Warren Commission business whopped me down. So we got through today and I just You know what I did. I went and got on the plane and came home and I didn't even have a toothbrush and I didn't bring bring a shirt. I got a few little things here. I didn't even have my pills, my antihistamine pills to take care of my emphysema.

LBJ: Well you ought to take another hour and go on and get your clothes.

RR: No, no. Well they was trying to prove that the same bullet that hit Kennedy first was the one that hit Connally, went through him, went through his hand, his bone and into his leg, and everything else. Just a lot of stuff there. I couldn't hear all the evidence and cross-examine all of them. But I did read the record and so I just . . . I don't know. I was the only fella there that even pratically suggested any change whatever and what the staff got up. I . . . this staff business always scares me. I like to put my own views down.

LBJ: Well, what difference does it make which bullet got Connally?

RR: Well it don't make much difference. But they said that they believe, the the Commission believes that the same bullet that hit Kennedy hit Connally. Well I don't believe it.

LBJ: I don't either.

RR: So I could'nt sign it. I said that Governor Connally testified directly to the contrary and I am not going to approve of that.

I finally made them say that there was a difference in the Commission on that. Part of them believed that it was'nt so.

And of course if that fella was accurate enough to hit Kennedy in the back with one shot, and knock his head off with the next one, when his head was leaning up against his wife's head and not even wound her. Why he didn't miss completely with that third shot. According to that theory, he not only missed the whole automobile but he missed the street. Well that man is a good enough shot to put two bullets into Kennedy, he didn't miss the ole automobile nor the street.

LBJ: What's the (word missed) of the whole thing? What's it state: That Oswald did it and he did it for any reason?

RR: Well he was a general misanthropic fella. He never been satisfied any where he was on earth. In Russia or here; and he had a desire to get his name in history and all. . . .

I don't think you will be displeased with the report. It's too long. But it's [missing] volumes.

LBJ: Unanimous?

RR: Yes, sir. I tried my best to get in a dissent. But they came around and traded me out of it by giving me a little ole thread of it

--end of transcript--

value — may not be as pure as health food store customers expect.

State agriculture officials have recently uncovered widespread use of illegal pesticides on ginseng in Wisconsin, where about 90 percent of the U.S. ginseng crop is grown. There are 1,500 ginseng growers in the state.

Last month, one grower in Wausau paid \$35,000 in fines. Six other misdemeanor cases of illegal pesticide use are pending in Wisconsin, said Dave Fredrickson, director of investigations and compliance for the state agriculture department.

While agriculture officials slammed the ginseng growers for using the chemicals — the pesticide lindane and the fungicide

with the illegal chemicals.

"What they were doing rips at the very fabric of pesticide use in this country — ignore the label. It becomes a game of catch me if you can," Mr. Fredrickson said.

One grower, Paul Hsu of Hsu Ginseng Farms, described the entire investigation as a farce.

"Ginseng is (a) small crop and (the) small crop is being picked on because small crop doesn't have the money to make the chemical company put them on the label," Mr. Hsu said.

Ginseng is sold at health food stores and by catalog in teas, tonics, extracts, capsules and root shavings. It is also used as an aphrodisiac.

Book: LBJ thought Castro was behind Kennedy assassination

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Lyndon Johnson thought Cuban President Fidel Castro played a role in the 1963 assassination of President Kennedy, but worried that a retaliatory strike on Cuba could lead to nuclear war, according to a new book.

He said publicly blaming Mr. Castro would generate a public outcry for an attack on Cuba or the Soviet Union that could "check us into a war that can kill 40 million Americans in an hour."

According to the book, "The Johnson White House Tapes, 1963-1964," by historian Michael R. Beschloss, Mr. Johnson also told the late Sen. Richard Russell in 1964 that he did not believe the conclusion of the Warren Commission, of which Mr. Russell was a member, that Mr. Kennedy was killed by a lone gunman.

The book casts Mr. Russell, D-Ga., as a reluctant member of the

commission who was pressured into signing the report against his will.

"I'm just worn out, fighting over that damned report," Mr. Russell is quoted as saying on one tape. "Well, I don't believe it."

"I don't either," Mr. Johnson said.

Newsweek magazine, in its edition on newsstands today, carries excerpts of the book, which details conversations from the secret tape recordings Mr. Johnson kept running during his stay in the White House. The book, published by Simon & Schuster, is to appear in bookstores this week.

In another conversation with former Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield in May 1964, Mr. Johnson suggests he might use the FBI to investigate Republican campaign contributions to get back at them for investigating his family finances.

Colorado football coach McCartney in 1990, and has drawn some 2.6 million men to its emotional stadium religious rallies since then.

Saturday's rally was just the beginning of what Mr. McCartney hopes will become a worldwide movement.

"I believe God is showing us now that he wants us to go global, and how that unfolds is anybody's guess," he said on NBC's "Meet the Press" Sunday.

But Mr. McCartney does have concrete plans to spread the

decision-making at home, should "gently" take author

The registered Rep emphasized that he envisions political agenda for his group when asked whether he would for the White House if George was necessary to do what McCartney said: "Absolutely a fool not to."

Those who attended said that despite long red-eye flights and adjustments, the trip was the trouble.

Pope's final Mass in Brazil draws more than 1 million

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil (AP) — Some peered from high-rise balconies and others climbed trees to see Pope John Paul II on Sunday, as more than a million people turned out for his final Mass in Brazil — one of his biggest crowds of the year.

Winding up a four-day visit, John Paul kept to his theme of defending the family, calling it "the fundamental community of love and life."

Globo TV estimated the crowd at bayside Flamengo Park at more than 1 million, while police put it at 2 million.

It was at least as large as the turnout this year in Paris and Krakow, Poland. But this one had a Brazilian flair — men in shorts and women in bikini tops, all swaying to hymns under the tropical sun. The temperature hit 82 degrees on the first warm Brazilian spring day since the pope arrived Thursday.

The fierce sun took its toll. Firemen sprayed the crowd with water and some 700 hundred people were treated for dehydration,

according to press reports.

"The show of enthusiasm the profound piety of the people will forever be in my memory," John Paul's farewell speech at Rio Air Base. At 7:00 p.m. his Alitalia MD-11 jet left for Rome.

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