

Mr. Connover Hunt  
JFK Assassination Exhibit  
Dallas County Administration Building  
Dallas, Texas,

7627 Old Receiver Road  
Frederick, Md. 21701  
2/20/89

Dear Mr. Hunt, *today's*

If ~~the~~ <sup>what I</sup> read in the Washington Post's story by Elizabeth Hudson is correct, you open your exhibit assuring it will deserve and receive the criticism I am sure you tried very hard to avoid.

She writes that you will be selling "volumes dealing with the Kennedy...murder."

You assuredly are not selling responsible books dealing with that great tragedy.

Your assuredly are not selling the original and basic books on it.

With the sole exception of mine they are all out of print and you have not been in touch with me.

You also cannot possibly have an exhibit that deals in any way the investigations and what has come to light as a result of them because if you had been I would have heard from you. I filed and litigated most of the efforts to bring this suppressed information to light, using the Freedom of Information Act. As a result I have about a third of a million pages of once-withheld records.

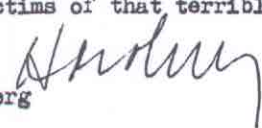
And not a single writer of any of the more recent book, all of which are seriously flawed, deceptive and misrepresentative, has been here to examine those records - all of which are now and forever will be freely available to all scholars. Despite the danger of misfiling and filching, and there has been some, I give unsupervised access to all those records, about 40 file cabinets of them, in part because of my age (76) and impaired health I cannot supervise those who use these records. They also use our copier to copy whatever they want. After my death, and I tell you this in the event any Texas institution should want copies in the future, they will be a public archive at local Hood College.

If you have been in touch with those who teach the assassination (as government) in our colleges, I would have heard from those who are responsible and do not teach it as a whodunit.

Most so-called experts are theoreticians, espousers of untenable theories. Some are experts in narrow areas. Perhaps you had no way of knowing this but a realistic inquiry would have informed you and you might have avoided what I am sure will cause you distress and if you are selling what is available it should. The one thing that I believe should be foremost in your mind is that your exhibit not in any way deceive or mislead the sorrowing people more than 15,000 of whom have written me - they do still sorrow. Including many not yet born when all of you were made added innocent victims of that terrible deed.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg



Mr. Connover Hunt  
JFK Assassination Exhibit  
Dallas County Administration Building  
Dallas, Texas,

7627 Old Receiver Road  
Frederick, Md. 21701  
2/20/89

Dear Mr. Hunt, *today's*

If ~~the~~ <sup>what</sup> I read in the Washington Post's story by Elizabeth Hudson is correct, you open your exhibit assuring it will deserve and receive the criticism I am sure you tried very hard to avoid.

She writes that you will be sealing "volumes dealing with the Kennedy...murder."

You assuredly are not selling responsible books dealing with that great tragedy.

You assuredly are not selling the original and basic books on it.

With the sole exception of mine they are all out of print and you have not been in touch with me.

You also cannot possibly have an exhibit that deals in any way the investigations and what has come to light as a result of them because if you had been I would have heard from you. I filed and litigated most of the efforts to bring this suppressed information to light, using the Freedom of Information Act. As a result I have about a third of a million pages of once-withheld records.

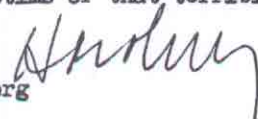
And not a single writer of any of the more recent book, all of which are seriously flawed, deceptive and misrepresentative, has been here to examine those records - all of which are now and forever will be freely available to all scholars. Despite the danger of misfiling and filching, and there has been some, I give unsupervised access to all those records, about 40 file cabinets of them, in part because of my age (76) and impaired health I cannot supervise those who use these records. They also use our copier to copy whatever they want. After my death, and I tell you this in the event any Texas institution should want copies in the future, they will be a public archive at local Hood College.

If you have been in touch with those who teach the assassination (as government) in our colleges, I would have heard from those who are responsible and do not teach it as a whodunit.

Most so-called experts are theoreticians, espousers of untenable theories. Some are experts in narrow areas. Perhaps you had no way of knowing this but a realistic inquiry would have informed you and you might have avoided what I am sure will cause you distress and if you are selling what is available it should. The one thing that I believe should be foremost in your mind is that your exhibit not in any way deceive or mislead the sorrowing people more than 15,000 of whom have written me - they do still sorrow. Including many not yet born when all of you were made added innocent victims of that terrible deed.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg



# The Sniper's Nest

## JFK Exhibit Opens in a Dallas Landmark

2/20/89  
By Elizabeth Hudson  
Special to The Washington Post

DALLAS—For a generation they have come here, thousands of visitors each year. They stand at Dealey Plaza and point to the Texas School Book Depository building, but in disbelief find no real memorial to help them make peace with the events of November 22, 1963.

When the Sixth Floor, an exhibit remembering the life and death of a president, opens at 10 this morning, it will mark the first-time the public has been allowed on the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository, where Lee Harvey Oswald is alleged to have fired the shots that killed President John F. Kennedy.

For more than 25 years this city has struggled with the guilt and

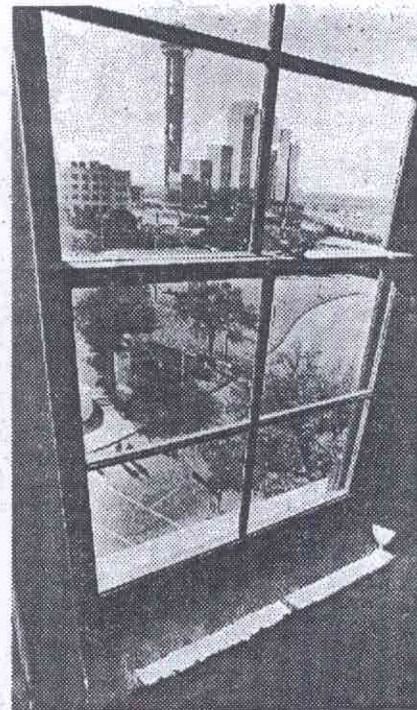
shame of the Kennedy assassination, ignoring the vacant and deteriorating seven-story brick structure that continues to draw visitors.

"The Sixth Floor will allow the public access to a site they have long wanted to see," said Lindalyn Adams, chairman of the Dallas County Historical Foundation, which organized the exhibit.

Adams and exhibit curator Conover Hunt have waited 11 years for today's opening. "The audiences kept coming," Hunt said. "They all wanted to find something. Over and over they have expressed profound regret that there is nothing here."

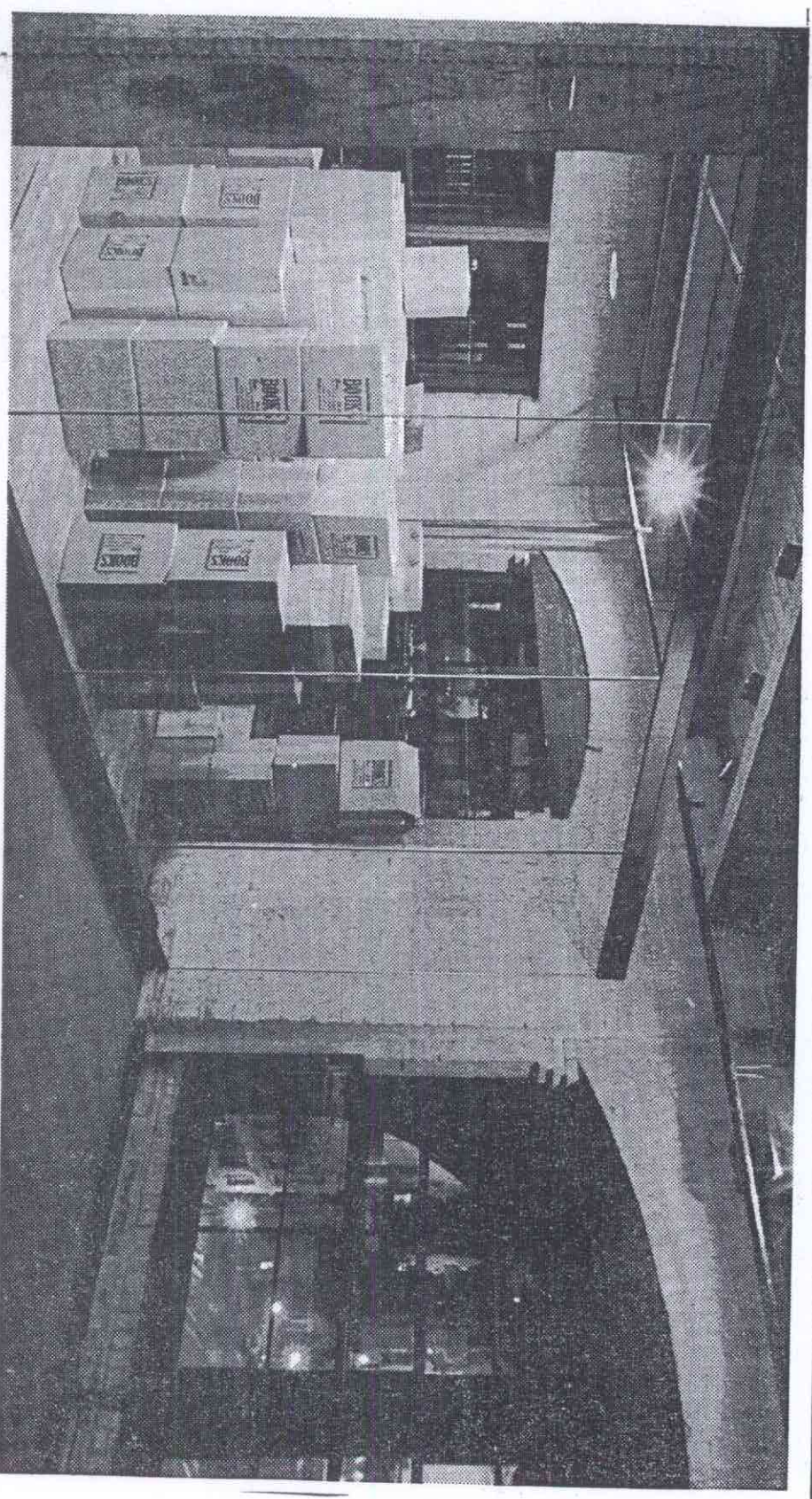
The Sixth Floor was born of that curiosity. The Dallas County Commissioner's Court approved the idea for a museum in 1979, and progress

See KENNEDY, D8, Col. 1



United Press International

The Texas School Book Depository window from which Kennedy is believed to have been shot.



The corner from which Lee Harvey Oswald allegedly fired the shots that killed John F. Kennedy is glassed off as part of the new Sixth Floor exhibit in Dallas.

© 1989 ART BEAULIEU PHOTOGRAPHY

# The Book Depository

KENNEDY, From D1

has been slow. But Dallas at last is coming to terms with the assassination," Hunt said. "We wouldn't have opened it if the community hadn't been ready for it."

The Texas School Book Depository Co. moved out of the 88-year-old building in 1971. It remained vacant through an organized drive to tear it down, and efforts to turn it into a commercial museum. Dallas County purchased it in 1977, renamed it the Dallas County Administration Building and renovated it for office space—all but the sixth floor, which has remained virtually untouched since the day of the shooting.

The Sixth Floor is a nonviolent exhibit, Hunt said. "It is an attempt to deal with [the assassination] positively, in that it is educational. It is objective." There are few artifacts (no attempt is made to recreate the functions of the old depository), but nearly 400 photographs mounted on white panels chronicle the culture and the politics of the time.

Absent is the gun Oswald allegedly used or any other vivid reminders of the shooting. Though portions of the now-famous "home movie" made by Abraham Zapruder film are shown, the segments showing the president as he was hit have been cut.

The "sniper's perch" where Oswald is believed to have fired has been reconstructed by arranging boxes around the window, but glass

barriers prevent access to that corner of the room.

The Kennedy family was never contacted about the exhibit. "The foundation never thought it was appropriate to contact the family in any way," Hunt said.

Last year Dallas County appropriated \$2.2 million for the construction of the visitors' center and twin elevators to the sixth floor. There are no souvenir stands, but a small bookshop sells volumes dealing with the Kennedy presidency, murder and legacy.

The exhibit covers 9,000 square feet—the entire sixth floor. It is spare and open with exposed ceilings that suggest a warehouse storeroom.

Visitors can rent a 35-minute audio tape narrated by local radio reporter Pierce Allman. "I was standing across the street when the president was shot and immediately ran into this building to call my . . . station," he begins. "I asked a man who was leaving where a phone was. The Secret Service later identified that man as Lee Harvey Oswald."

Allman's voice gives way to Chubby Checker singing "Come on baby, let's do the twist," as the exhibit sets a 1960s mood. "To Kill a Mockingbird" and "The Feminine Mystique" were bestsellers, movie audiences were flocking to see "Psycho," and Andy Williams was singing "Moon River."

Narration and sound effects coincide with panels of the exhibit. Ken-

edy speeches are heard; so are the strains of a cello (there is a photograph of Pablo Casals when he played at the White House). The panels continue through "Civil Rights," "The Red Threat," "Space," "The Family" and, finally, "The Trip to Dallas."

In the last, the more than 200,000 parade watchers are shown holding signs that say "Forward with VI-GAH!" and waving and smiling. Included are remnants of those less charmed with Kennedy—"Wanted for Treason" written across a pamphlet that was distributed in Dallas the day of the assassination.

Then the white panels change to black as frames from the Zapruder film show the next horrifying seconds. Gunshots ring out on the tape as an eyewitness says, "The first thing I thought was, 'Oh God, let it be a firecracker.'"

Penned to the wall next to an old Associated Press wire machine is original copy. "Get off the wire," it reads. "Stay off the wire. A sniper seriously wounded Kennedy in downtown Dallas today—perhaps fatally."

Then photographs of crowds gathered at Parkland Hospital, stunned faces hovering around car radios, disbelief and tears.

Though the corner window is sealed, a length of windows along that wall look down on Elm Street. Except for the shiny, mirrored Hyatt Regency, the view is much the same as it was in 1963. "There were some spent shells right here on the floor," comes the taped memory of Dallas Deputy Sheriff Eugene Boone. "And there was also a brown bag with

some partially eaten lunch." Looking down to the right is the grassy knoll, from which many witnesses insisted shots were fired.

Oswald is featured throughout the next panels, ending with the Bob Jackson photo taken the moment Jack Ruby stepped up and shot Oswald.

Lyndon Johnson is sworn in as president and there is a funeral in Washington before the exhibit turns to investigations, evidence and theories of conspiracy.

The total project cost \$3.5 million, \$1.3 million of which was raised from private donors. A \$4 admission fee will be used to repay the \$2.2 million county loan and to cover operating expenses. Hunt predicted that 500,000 people would visit the exhibit each year. Perhaps because of the building's violent past, all visitors will be required to pass through metal detectors.

"It's that one ounce of prevention," Hunt said.

For years sojourners to Dealey Plaza have written their thoughts, leaving behind notes and letters that were collected by a city worker and are now stored in the public library. To continue that tradition, memory books have been stationed at the exhibit's end for visitors to record their thoughts.

"The Kennedy assassination is still a painful memory," Hunt said. "People are still recovering, so there isn't 100 percent support for the exhibit.

"But we're not doing this to encourage people to attend," she said, "but to accommodate the thousands who have been coming. Visitors come here day and night."

And to critics who contend a death site is a morbid place for an exhibit, she says, "Look at Ford's Theatre. Look at any battlefield. People come here to let go."

"History, after all," says a John F. Kennedy quote at the exhibit's beginning, "is the memory of a nation."