

Dear Nigel,

See separate 25 anniversary file

11/24/88

"let us know what you think of the finished product," you wrote, "even if you don't like it." So I wonder if you recall my caution that if you pursue a whodunit you are certain to have serious trouble. I think you do, in evaluating the finished product other than as entertainment. It is first-rate as entertainment, the first part is perhaps the best thing of its sort that I've seen, at least that I recall seeing, and as best a non-professional can judge professionalism, the finished product is technically fine, as it is judged as a show rather than a documentary.

If you later want more specificity from me, please let me know. I still can't use my better eye much, not for writing and my handwriting is ordinarily illegible anyway. So I made no notes. I decided not to wait for the friend who'll want to see it when I didn't feel like reading, a slow process now, until the friends with whom we are having Thanksgiving come for us.

Beverly Oliver, Gary Arnold and the mute are not new and their stories are not new. Each has self-destruct built in. You needed a devil's advocate because except for entertainment you didn't need them to say what you are saying. *And for their stories.*

Please understand that I have no problem with any allegation of conspiracy. I'm the first to have stated this in a book. Nor do I question that there were people on the knoll and not officially identified. I'm the one who said what later was confirmed by Itek, that the fifth Willis slide shows a man in that general area, beyond the stone fence. Or marble, I've forgotten now.

Some madeup stories not uncommonly have silly touches because those making them up are not professionals. The mute's story about taking the rifle apart in broad daylight and plaining it in a toolbox is such. (I don't recall that he said what then was done with the toolbox.) *And there existed a dome hiding place of which I have pictures. Super.*

Generally this is true of madeup stories, even by pros, like David. It is when they get into specifics that they give themselves away. Here again, don't misunderstand me because it is I who persuaded Quin Shea to make those FBI records available to Bud Fensterwald. I also read some reports Bud got from someone he had taking a looksee in Europe and cautioned him and Jim that this was no more than improvisation on available information. This is not uncommon in such cases. I spotted it correctly in the FBI's King and JFK records. People do that kind of thing.

With David it is, for one thing, the lily-gilding in saying that a shot from the back hit JFK in the back when he also said that one shot was about horizontal. The real evidence does not permit a shot of this kind from the back but that a shot in the back was ~~alleged by a source who was not qualified~~ officially ~~was~~ well publicized.

I don't recall whether we discussed this but when I do discuss efforts to solve the case with those trying ~~that~~ I refer to the tests I apply, is this reasonable, and if something survives that, is this possible? You have too much in the pretended solution area that fails these simple tests, too much that is like the content of novels, too much not likely to be real. I don't, for example, see how you could swallow any part of the Oliver tale, and I've not bothered to compare it with the printed versions of years ago. I don't see how anyone at all familiar with the FBI and how it works could have believed that it offered Arnold money to keep his mouth shut. In all the many records I've read and all I've read about it I've never had any minuscule hint of such operations. Moreover, if it had wanted the film ~~and for it not to return to him,~~ accomplishing that was simple; they apologize for accidental destruction in processing. Moreover, there is a written record of where every FBI man was at that time and none, as near there save for being in a restaurant with others.

Paul Connor's story is very persuasive but entirely wrong. There is no part of Lifton's theory that is even tenable and any reading of his book, rewritten to make it appear that he had discovered sex and invented the wheel, makes it apparent that he claims originality for what was published long in advance for everything in addition to his theory. This, I think, ought make one suspicious of all he says. *and did.* In any event, the Sibert-O'Neill report is quite specific in saying that they saw the corpse as it was removed from the casket and that it was wrapped in sheets, not Connor's body bag. They are specific in identifying the casket as the one in which it had been transported. If you do not, ^{as} a xerox, see Post Mortem, page 534.

You can, of course, as Lifton does, assume that half the world was conspiring but remember, all of this was when the FBI had to assume there would be a trial and that most if not all the records would be used in it, particularly by the defense. Oswald then was very much alive and uncharged. It is doubtful that Sibert and O'Neill even knew he would be charged at 3 p.m. Washington time, 2 Dallas time. And the casket is not the one Connor describes and is covered by receipts for even the broken part and the bloody sheets.

If you are interested in disproof of the rest of Lifton's fabrication, let me know. No part is tenable, it is that impossible. I made a FOIA request of the Military District of Washington for only what it disclosed to him, aside from the other information on which I draw. in saying this.

I'd appreciate copies of anything you can provide on the computer enhancement, mostly for archival purposes. I don't know which "ooman print you used. I loaned Robert, Gary and Jack mine, which they said was clearest, but I think they told me that Frank Thompson's had more contrast. From Jack White's photographic work I am confident I saw a man's face clearly.

Cyril, who I think was magnificent, especially at the close, in part clears up the earlier stuff on explosive bullets, which was not right as used earlier, but he was not definitive on frangibility. Without special manufacture there would be a rather larger percentage that does not fragment and tear, toward the base. I do not know whether this would be true of special manufacture.

There is nothing we know that is not inconsistent with a shot from that part of that knoll. If you theorize the head shot that was fatal, damage to the left hemisphere would have been inevitable and all the evidence is that there was none. No other hit from there was possible.

What you have Brouty saying is based on a handbook for thugs in a conflict situation outside the country and is not new. Back in my OSS days we used thugs and even had handbooks they prepared - for use abroad. The assassination of a president is domestic and has to presume intensive inquiry if at no other time in a trial and that kind of greasy kid stuff is irrelevant. There is no way high-level and official conspirators would not assume the most intensive examination of everything. I do not presume knowledge of all the possible details but I am confident that the minimum requirement would be total and complete deniability. This means the use of cutouts that would make any connection impossible. Do you think that those who offed Hoffa, Giancana and Roselli would have been less careful and successful in killing a President? There are quite a few unsolved mafia killings.

I think also that if you had bent ^{this} the considerable skill and effort along the line I suggested your finish product would have had considerable impact, could have had tangible results and would not have met with the kinds of criticisms I've heard this one got from what appeared in the papers I see. With a single exception what US TV produced was cheap and lousy....At some point, again only for archival purposes, I'd appreciate copies of any of the complaints and adverse criticisms as well as good reviews you can let me have. With best wishes,

Handwritten signature