

Mr. Nat Elfin, Editor, Special Projects  
U.S. News  
2400 H St., NW  
Washington, DC 20037

8/13/92

Dear Mr. Elfin,

After reading your 8/17/92 "Special Report" that takes up virtually the entire cover with the blood-red "JFK" followed by "The Untold Story of the Warren Commission," I wondered who could have sired such a frighteningly ugly bastard. You edit special projects, this surely is a "special" report, so I assume you. If not, will you please route this to the man who had so little personal and professional self respect that he would hippodrome his regurgitation of the ancient and soured cud as "the untold story" and whose concept of responsible journalism is to tell your readers that the Warren report was correct because its staff says it was correct and whose personal and professional integrity demanded that no independent authority be consulted.

With no reason to believe that those who would publish such a spectacularly dishonest abandonment of traditional journalistic standards could have any interest in a detailed commentary on it I do not provide such a commentary. However, I do tell you that you (pl) lied, distorted, misrepresented and used as your exclusive sources those who failed the nation in that time of great stress and ever since.

What did you expect them to say other than that black is white, up is down? Did you expect them to condemn themselves and to boast of their failures?

You (again pl) invest your personal and professional reputations on this? Without concern, without shame?

My work has never been the pursuit of any assassination whodunit. In my seven books there is not a single conspiracy theory. I have in fact been the not infrequently credited source of stories debunking them in papers you read, including the NY Times and the Wx Post and the <sup>perhaps</sup> St. Louis Post-Dispatch. Journalistic indifference to factuality and accuracy in my books on the JFK assassination and its official investigations led to the thrust of my work, as I am certain your wife's colleague, who knows it and me very well will tell her and you, into an indepth study of the functioning and non-functioning of the basic institutions of our society in that time of great stress and ever since. The press in all its forms is in a society like ours one of these basic institutions. It failed us then and it fails us now in this disgraceful, self-characterizing "special report."

So, the whoring press whoring and serious illnesses further limiting what I can do, I serve the role of making a record for history, whether or not it is ever consulted, as I believe in the future it may well be. And in this sense I welcome the to me astounding dishonesty and sycophancy of this "special report" that ranges from what would not be

accepted from a reasonably intelligent high-school student to what would make a failure of a college thesis.

What you (pl) evolved and so shamelessly published is so obviously bad and faulted it is not necessary for me to write <sup>anything</sup> ~~anything~~ about it for those who in the future may be interested in how the press functions <sup>ed</sup> and malfunctioned <sup>low</sup> after its disgraceful failure when the President was assassinated. My highlighting will be adequate for those who know anything at all about the established and unquestionable fact of the assassination and its investigations.

While there is no reason to believe that those who would vest their reputations on so wretchedly terrible an article could have any interest in the truth if not also in learning how their trust was imposed upon by their sources, from this highlighting and memory that is not as good at 70 as it once was I am quite prepared to document what I say herein and for it to be tape-recorded.

As an example of imposed-upon trust, where you say that Bobby Kennedy denied the Commission the use of the autopsy film, you cite Arlen Specter's memo saying that consideration of this film was essential. I published that memo years ago. Along with one about which either he did not tell you or you suppressed, another of his memos in which, consistent with his career of covering his own ass, he told the Commission that Bobby had ~~said~~ said that it could have and use anything it needed, including this.

And I also published years ago and in facsimile the pages of a Warren Commission executive session transcript - classified "TOP Secret" by the Commission that lacked any authority to classify anything - in which Rankin told McCloy that they in fact had those pictures. (enclosed)

You say that at his 1/20/64 meeting with the staff Warren told them that "truth is our only client." There were two staff memos on that meeting. Neither says this. But what may interest you is that Warren told the staff he took the job because if he did not there might be "40 million lives" lost, a rather original way of saying there was no conspiracy, and that Howard Willens omitted this in his bobtailed account of that session. (also enclosed. The previous page is the second of a phony transcript Rankin prepared of the session Russell forced so he could record his disagreement with the single-bullet theory. When I put that along with the Archives written statement there is no other transcript <sup>of that session</sup> in ~~Russell's~~ Russell's hands he encouraged my work until his dying day, expressing regret he could not do anything to help me.)

Truth, alas, was either the Commission's client nor yours.

Sincerely,

*Harold Weisberg*

Harold Weisberg

January 21, 1964

(Williams, although technically his employee, was part of the deliberate blackmailing of Bobby Kennedy, who was then the Attorney General. I devote an entire chapter to this in a completed book I lack the funds to publish, POST MORTEM. It deals with the autopsy and with evidence relevant to it and this official whitewashing. In June 1964 Williams drafted the letters in which this Commission actually sought to blame Bobby if its Report would be criticized or found unacceptable. The alternative - the blackmail - was that the Commission would call Bobby a witness and bleed him a little more. Bobby was a witness to nothing except the lunch he was having at his Hickory Hill home when his older brother was killed. The other end of the operation, that inside the Department of Justice, involved the trusted Nicholas deB. Katzenbach who, as Bobby's adviser and Deputy Attorney General, set still for this unhidden threat, this blackmail.)

Comparing Williams' account of what Warren said with that of Melvin Eisenberg gives but an indication of what it would require a book to develop in full!

MEMORANDUM February 17, 1964

TO: Files  
FROM: Melvin A. Eisenberg

SUBJECT: First Staff Conference (January 20, 1964)  
On January 20, 1964, Chief Justice Warren met with the staff.

After brief introductions, the Chief Justice discussed the circumstances under which he had accepted the chairmanship of the Commission.

When the position had first been offered to him he declined it, on the principle that Supreme Court Justices should not take this kind of role. His associate Justices concurred in this decision.

At this point, however, President Johnson called him. The President stated that rumors of the most exaggerated kind were circulating in this country and overseas. Some rumors went as far as attributing the assassination to a faction within the Government wishing to see the Presidency assumed by President Johnson. Others, if not quenched, could conceivably lead the country into a war which could cost 40 million lives. No one could refuse to do something which might help to prevent such a possibility. The President convinced him that this was an occasion on which actual conditions had to override general principles.

The Chief Justice then discussed the role of the Commission. He placed emphasis on the importance of quenching rumors, and precluding future speculation such as that which has surrounded the death of Lincoln. He emphasized that the Commission had to determine the truth, whatever that might be.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD  
From: Howard P. Williams  
Re: Staff meeting of January 20, 1964

On the above date members of the staff who were on duty attended a staff meeting at which the Chief Justice was present. In addition to the Chief Justice, Mr. Rankin and myself, the following persons were present: Messrs. Huber, Bell, Redlich, Stern, Spector, Griffin, Dellin, Shaffer, Eisenberg and Cleason. At the beginning of the meeting the Chief Justice recounted the reasons why he undertook the job as Chairman of the Commission. He described his initial reluctance to do this when the Solicitor General and the Deputy Attorney General asked him to do so. Then he recounted his conversation with President Johnson, which changed his mind. He stated that the President was very concerned regarding the international repercussions of the assassination and called upon the Chief Justice to help. The Chief Justice stated that he felt under those circumstances he had no alternatives. He stated that the President had instructed him to find out the whole truth and nothing but the truth and that is what he intended to do.

In a December 11, 1972, appearance on public TV Warren confirmed this was his belief, that unless he undertook this task he should not have the world would be incinerated. Then only the Soviet Union had the capability of launching a nuclear attack on the United States.

If this could be believed, what could not be? For those uncomfortable with fact, this is the fact as Warren gave it. It is also his expression of his motive and there is no protest from those who served him in this task.

This same belief of mature and sophisticated men in the incredible permeates the January 27 transcript. While it may not be apparent to those who have not made a detailed study of the work of this Commission, it is the fact. The Commissioners are not merely bewildered, lost and fumbling, as they may seem to some. However, the words of the transcript are such that understanding these things is not essential to understanding what the Commission was up to from the first, the search for a means of foisting off a preconceived conclusion, the deliberate hiding of what actually happened when JFK was killed.

For is there the need to take each and every occasion of the many this transcript provides of their deliberation of whitewashing and compare it with their record and the evidence they suppressed to make comprehensible what the Commission did. Several illustrations are enough proof. Doing more would require a separate long book.

Oswald As a Federal Agent - The Reinvestigation  
The real reason for this executive session is Rankin's need to involve the members of the Commission in the covering up of what he called the dirty rumor. It had to do something about. If he had not he could have been held responsible. By involving the members, he shifted responsibility from himself.  
The "rumor" - and it was more than that - was published more

It was suggested by one of the Commissioners that it would be helpful to members of the Commission if they each had a page proof of Chapter I of the proposed Report as soon as it is obtained from the Public Printer for their examination. The General Counsel was thereupon instructed to make arrangements for delivery of such page proof to each of the Commissioners promptly upon receipt of the same from the Public Printer.

A Motion was made, seconded and carried that there be provided 100 copies of the Report and Hearings bound in buckram for the Commissioners to distribute as they may determine and that in addition 500 copies of just the Report be provided for such distribution.

A Motion was made, seconded and carried that leather bound copies of the Report and Hearings with the names of the proposed recipients stamped on them in gold be provided for the President and such persons as he might select, for members of the Kennedy family in accordance with the direction from the White House, and for the Commissioners.

A Motion was made, seconded and carried that one set of the Report and Hearings with the proposed recipient's name stamped in gold be furnished each of the staff members who have been with the Commission a substantial period of time in the work of the investigation and preparation of the Report.

any of the Commissioners read this fake transcript so long after the President's life ended there was nothing he could have done. He would have seen that this and succeeding pages are selective paraphrasing, not verbatim transcription. It was in this way that Senator Russell's motions to the Report were returned from the record.

minutes we are making to the FBI and the Secret Service and everybody else. We would like you to have that. That will give you a really good picture along with the synopsis you have as to what we think might do some further guidance in this further picture.

Is that the kind of thing, Senator Cooper, that you had in mind, would that be helpful?

Sen. Cooper. Yes, I know we have to finish the agenda but I thought after that even at this point, there have been questions raised in your own mind about --

Mr. McCloy. About circulation.

Sen. Cooper. And in our own mind, I have one or two it might be well to discuss it.

Mr. McCloy. Let me ask you about this raw material business that is here. What does it consist of? Does it consist of the raw material of the autopsy? They talk about the colored photographs of the President's body -- do we have those?

Mr. Rankin. Yes, it is part of it, a small part of it.

Mr. McCloy. Are they here?

Mr. Rankin. Yes. But we don't have the minutes of the autopsy, and we asked for that because we wanted to see what doctor A said about something while he was saying it, to see whether it is supported by the conclusions in the autopsy and so forth, and then to have volumes of material in which people have purported to have said, or say to various agencies certain things, they are not sworn,

This is page 35 of the Executive Session of 1/21/64. Despite later contrary testimony, Rankin is here explicit in saying the Commission did have the colored photographs of the President's body, the autopsy pictures. This means there was never any need for the fake sketches used as "evidence" (see p. 156). There is