

Oct. 10, 1966

923A Fulton St.
S.F., Calif.
94117

Dear Mr. Weisberg:

I thought I'd write you to keep you informed as to the latest developments here in the Bay Area.

First, I want to call your attention to a story I wrote for the Berkeley Barb. I'm enclosing a copy of that issue. The copy sold out completely within a day of publication. It reaches an estimated readership of about 42,000 (counting people who read it after someone else passes it on) - a rather phenomenal figure for a small paper after one year of circulation.

That story dealt with the article that appeared in the Greater Philadelphia Magazine of August 1 by Gaeton Fonzi. Fonzi interviewed both Salandria and Specter and his conclusions devastate the Commission totally and irreparably. It's incredible that anyone can still defend the Commission after reading that article but, of course, they will continue to do so. I'm sure that by now you are familiar with the article and its contents. If not, you should by all means get a copy. It would be worth your while to contact Fonzi and see what he intends doing to follow up his proposal that the Commission be reopened. As for his suggestion that Specter take the lead in such a call I do not weigh that very heavily but you'll note that Specter in the U.S. News and World Report (Oct. 10) says he would not stand in the way of such a reopening. Of course he also defends the Commission but Specter is all politician now and he could not have made any other statement. For him to admit that the Warren Commission erred significantly would amount to open defiance of the Commission. That he cannot do.

I note, too, that Life magazine is also calling for a reopening. True, the Oct. 7 issue of Life is by an individual (Loudon Wainwright) making such a call but nevertheless readers of Life will interpret it as bearing the approval of Life itself.

Even the National Review has gotten into the act. Their motives, to be sure, are suspect but the fact remains now that significant sectors of American intellectual opinion are calling for a reopening of the Commission.

What does all this mean? Does Life, which played such a central role in establishing Oswald's guilt and then convicting him really want to get the facts at the bottom of this? Or are they interested in another cover-up and official whitewash? Is pressure (unseen) being used to get a reopening of the Commission by unknown political forces such as Bobby Kennedy? What do you think?

So much for the calls for another investigation.

As I promised I'm enclosing a copy of Don Stanley's review of Leo Sauvage's book.

I want to thank you for sending me that document on an alleged meeting that Lee Oswald was to have had with Arnold Louis Kessler. (I'm referring to Exhibit #958 of the National Archives). I'm enclosing a copy of this also so that you can study it and see if you agree with my conclusions.

The importance of this particular exhibit is that it appears to contradict a statement in the Warren Report. Note that on page 305 of the Report it states that "no credible witness has been located who

saw Oswald with any unidentified person while in Mexico City; to the contrary, he was observed traveling alone while in Mexico City, at his hotel, and at the nearby restaurant where he frequently ate. A hotel guest stated that on one occasion he sat down at a table with Oswald at the restaurant because no empty table was available, but that neither spoke to the other because of the language barrier." It continues to state on the same page: "Investigation of other guests of the hotel who were there when Oswald was has failed to uncover anything creating suspicion".

Based on the above one would conclude that no one had eaten dinner with Oswald while he was in Mexico City. Yet, CE 958 is a document that discusses a dinner that Oswald had with Kessler. According to it, 'Arnold furnished no other details to this source regarding this dinner'.

The "source" is a confidential one according to the FBI and it may well be that Arnold had not given any "other details" to him but I hold this very doubtful based on what I have learned about this meeting ~~with~~ between Oswald and Kessler. Here is what I have learned:

I have a friend of mine who also spoke to Kessler about this alleged meeting between him and Oswald. He spoke to him before the date of CE 958 (that is, before April 14, 1964). According to my friend Kessler was staying at the Casa de los Amigos Hotel where this friend of mine had also stayed during a trip he made there. Kessler told him that ~~he~~ he had breakfast with Oswald once and that Oswald had treated him. Oswald, Kessler said, pulled out a big roll of money, held it high and said: "See this money ---there's more where this came from". He then told Kessler that he could have all the big breakfasts he wanted.

There is a discrepancy between CE#958 and this version in that my friend insists that ~~Oswald~~ it was breakfast that Oswald and Kessler had together and not dinner. In trying to recollect the story, too, this friend of mine now believes that Kessler said that not he (Kessler) but a friend of Kessler had the breakfast with Oswald but is unclear in his mind on that point. One thing is clear though, and that is that Oswald certainly had eaten with someone Kessler knew or Kessler, himself. In judging my friend's evaluation of this meeting I'd be inclined to accept the fact that it was dinner and it was Kessler who actually ate with Oswald. I base this on how he handles reports of other conversations on other matters which I later learn differ slightly in content.

Now, perhaps, you can understand why the FBI would want to classify CE # 959 and not reveal its contents. Such a remark by Oswald would indicate that he was receiving money from some source to finance his ventures. What do you think?

Another thing I noticed about this document is how cleverly worded it is. The FBI report doesn't state that Kessler furnished "other ~~xxxxxx~~ details" about this meeting, to it (the FBI). It says that "no other details" were given to the "source." Thus, the FBI's hands are clean--once again it can claim because it can point to a document and say there are "no other details" about this particular event. Very clever of them, indeed and very typical, too.

I'm enclosing a copy of a story that appeared some time ago indicating how touchy the U.S. Government is about its image abroad with respect to the Warren Commission. Of course, it is the Soviet Government raising questions about the Warren Commission but I note that it was Washington sending a man to Soviet Foreign Ministry to protest a story charging the assassination was the work of a conspiracy. Evidently, LBJ put the word through, himself, to scotch those rumors. He doesn't want anyone to dare mention that he came to power because of a conspiracy.

I am gathering stories together to reprint a compilation of statements made by leading journals or Congressmen or any public figures demanding a reopening of the Commission or hint at it. I note that Senator Fulbright is quoted in Epstein's paperback edition and that he quotes approvingly from both his and your book. I have not been able to come up with this quote. Do you have it or do you know where I can obtain it? Have you had any correspondence with him on this? If so could you send me a copy (or better yet - a photostated one) from him. It will be very useful in articles for the Berkeley Barb. The editor is very willing to print anything I want to turn over to him except of course, when problems of space become a dominant factor in getting things into print.

Also note in Life Magazine (Oct. 7) that Congressman Theodore Kupperman of N.Y. has also asked for the creation of a joint Senate and House Committee to study the record and see if a new investigation is warranted. Do you know when he made this proposal and his full statement? There has been no mention of it here on the West Coast. If you could send it to me I'd appreciate it.

I have seen the advance issue of Ramparts and it is excellent. The issue will be out on October 20 (that is the Nov. issue) and it will deal with Penn Jones and his work on the 14 deaths. There is a review of all the recent books in the back pages (including yours, of course). An interesting end to the article is a story about what IBJ told a newsman who asked him if he had read any of the new books criticizing the Warren Commission. Johnson replied no, he hadn't but that he had given an aide the task of reading them all and inform him as to their contents. The reporter then asked him. "What's your conclusion?" IBJ answered: "Earl Warren's in trouble".

The way I see it IBJ's in trouble and he knows it.

Now here are some other things I want to mention:

I'm enclosing a copy of Paul Hoch's work on the five different versions of Life magazine (I was wrong when I told you there were six different issues). You also asked me if I had the so-called Memorial Edition of Life but I have not been able to obtain it. If you get a hold of an extra copy please send me one.

The Berkeley Barb would like to know if you would like to have your new book serialized in weekly installments or if we could print excerpts before the regular printing. Perhaps you would like to send me something that I could break down into several issues of the Barb. So far I haven't told anyone about what the new book will contain.

Have you been able to determine why Liebeler had to mark the Altgens location himself when he quarreled with Altgens? Also do you now have a correct positioning of Altgens?

You mention that Lillian Castellano was correct on the Willis slide #5 but that you reached the same conclusion by different means. How did you determine that - could you explain?

I note that you are particularly interested in the Willis slides, particularly #4, 5, and 8. I also am interested in several of Willis slides particularly #5, 8 and 10. Number five is understandable because it would locate the various positions of Zapruder, Willis and Kennedy. But I wonder if your interest in slide # 8 is the same reason that I am interested in it. Allow me to tell you what I have found out about slide #8 and also # 10 and see if you don't agree.

Someone recently pointed out that there was a photo that appeared in the National Geographic magazine of January, 1966 on page 102 that showed a man resembling Jack Ruby with President Kennedy. She said that

what drew her attention to this photo was another similar one she had seen published in the Warren Report showing Ruby at a press conference. I checked out the National Geographic photo and compared it to the one with Ruby at a press conference (which I determined to be Commission Exhibit #2424 appearing on page 341 in the official Government Printing Office edition). This photo shows Ruby at the so-called midnight press conference held Nov. 22, 1963 and the caption reads: "Jack Ruby is the individual in the dark suit, back row, right-hand side, wearing horn-rimmed glasses". The same photo (cropped in half at the bottom) appears in the Bantam edition of the Report in the insert photos set after page 344 and before page 345 except that the Bantam edition has a much darker version of Ruby that makes him appear to be wearing dark glasses and a very dark (almost black) suit.

I noted that CE#2424 is also found on page 524 of Vol. 25 next to Exhibit #2423 which also shows Ruby, his back turned, looking to his left. Now turn to the photo taken by Willis known as slide Number 8 which appears on page 771 in Volume 21 (bottom of page). Notice that there is a somewhat blurred figure in the right foreground of the picture with his back turned. He appears to be balding at the top of his head and looks like the figure in CE#2423 - that is Jack Ruby, himself. In fact, the jacket looks very much like that of Ruby's and even the creases to be along the same folds.

When I first spoke to an investigator for Lane about two years ago he said that when the FBI first looked at his picture they said to Willis, "Hey - there's Jack Ruby. What's he doing there?!" This investigator did not mention which figure in the picture the Agents were referring to but much has been made of the fact that the Willis slide has been cropped at the right side so that a man wearing dark glasses is cut in half and that he resembles Ruby. I have seen the uncropped photo and studied the man on the extreme right of the Volume's cropped version and I do not see any resemblance. This cropping could have been diversionary to draw attention away from the real point of Willis slide #8 which the Agents made reference to and that is that Ruby is, indeed, the man whose back is turned. This investigator for Lane also told me that when Willis displayed these slides to the Commission he (Willis) pointed to the man resembling Ruby (as to which figure he didn't say) and said that it was Ruby but that the members of the Commission made no comment.

Now after examining these turn to slide #10 of Willis on page 772. I measured this photo to be 5-3/32" across and 3-11/32" up and down. There is a man who is standing on the sidewalk in front of the Depository Building who is 2-5/16" from the left edge of the photo and 1-5/8" from the bottom of it. It is too small to identify but one can observe ~~xxxx~~ his left hand extending along his side and what appears to be a white handkerchief prominently bulging from left pocket of his suit jacket. Now turn to Exhibit #2424 and observe that Jack Ruby is shown standing and his handkerchief is prominently bulging also. I believe that the man with the handkerchief is probably Jack Ruby in Willis # 10. What do you think?

Now about Willis #5. You stated that you had detected an alteration in it that Lillian hadn't. What is it and what do you think it means?

As for the reasons why the Commission did not make available the early slides of Zapruder, and other films such as Muchmore and Betzner perhaps this may be explained on the basis of what I have concluded above. Jack Ruby was at the assassination site and moved toward the building after the shots rang out. These films would show him there and it would disprove the Warren Commission's claim that Ruby was somewhere else.

You mentioned that it would be a good idea for the Berkeley Barb to do an article on the National Archives documents that are still ~~classified~~. I wasn't clear in my mind, though, what you meant by "consulting a bibliography". Where can I obtain one of these?

~~I&X~~ I'm sure there are probably other things that I wanted to mention but it slips my mind at this point. Anyway, this letter will give you some idea of how things are going along here.

Please let me know how you're coming along. I am most anxious to do what I can to publicize whatever you have and there are many others who want to help out in any way they can.

Hope everything is coming along fine.

Sincerely,

Harold Verb

P.S. I'm also enclosing a copy of a Dallas map that locates Tippit at the moment of the assassination. I haven't studied it yet but perhaps you can make something of it. It was given to me by an investigator ~~fixing~~ working on this angle.

Is it possible to receive any of these prints that relate to the assassination. They would be very helpful for articles, lectures and discussions that I and others are planning?

Thanks again.

10/12/66

Dear Hal,

Your long letter is rich and helpful, exciting, and the enclosures are promising, but I've had no time to read any except the Sauvage review. Stanley was very kind to me, and it did help.

I am past exhaustion at the end of a tiring day, and as soon as I can I'll answer your letter in detail. The Ruby stuff is one of the things I'm interested in, and I have something fresh on him.

All the things in which you thought I'd be interested, I am. I am very anxious to see the Ramparts issue as soon as possible. Those cheapskates owe me something like a couple of bucks in return for which, if you can speak to them, I'd appreciate an airmail copy as soon as it is out.

There is little I can report, although there are some promising things. I've completed the rough draft of my sequel, about 400 double-spaced pages. I want to say nothing about it for now. I think you will find it interesting. I may have some publisher interest, but I've been through that before.

The length of the endless days is beginning to tell. Please excuse me with my sincere expression of thanks and I'll answer in detail as soon as I can.