

Dear Hal,

11/17/96

MANY thanks for your long letter of 11/12, the encl^hasures and what both say about COPA. Belin and Liebeler can be dismissed as being themselves and repeating themselves. Some like the long piece by Scott are interesting but take us nowhere and twist things a little. Like Otepka's being fired. Had he not been ^{far} of the right he'd have been fired much earlier and possibly prosecuted. He was part of the campaign to rid the government of all ^{Genghis} not to the right of ^{encl}is Khan. And he did it in violation of law and people's rights. What you say about COPA behavior is probably Judge being himself. The Aguilar-Cunningham reference to that Burkley memo questu^ong whether Oswald was alone I'd like to see if you have it. Also that LBJ memo saying the pathologists were leaned on. Scott is right in saying the agencies will outwait the ARMB.

I've not heard from or about Bob Castorr in many years. He and his wife separated. Last time I remember seeing him was at the 75th birthday party for the man with the recording business and he was quite a few years older than I. Castorr had friends in this area. At that party he took me around introducing me to his friends and the most patriotic man in the country. So I have no way of knowing his phone number. He also was older than I but I do not recall any obit. It is possible that he moved to another part of the country.

You mention what you wrote about the La Fontaine and Hosty books. I've completed book-length manuscripts on both of them. Debra Conway asked me to write something about the La F assault on Odio. I wrote at ^o same length about the La F's. She said she liked it but told me day before yesterday that it will be delayed.

What you say about Jones saying he had 8 men assigned to Dallas who would say they were from the SS is interesting. Do you have any kind of record on that?

On Powell, he also did a report he gave to the FBI. The FBI merely ignored my repeated requests for a copy of it. I'd ask about that report and any other pictures. Any record of destruction of records, consultation on that.

You should enjoy a week in Dallas. I hope it is not dominated by the nuttiness of so many such gatherings. They sent me the award and we sent them yesterday videotaped thank I should have prepared in advance not to forget so much of what I'd thought to say. Debra gave me to understand they'd like a little more than "thanks" so I recalled a little about the earliest days on nonpublication on the subject. While I'd probably get to be exasperated by much of that nuttiness, I regret not being able to get to such gatherings to be able to spend a little time with the nonnuts I like. Well, maybe one or two who are nuts but I still like.

Your paper was a good one, no doubt the reason they were prejudiced against it. In any longer treatment I'm sure you use other sources and include what you had no space for with the limitations there.

I hear that Lifton made some gifts to ARRB at LA. For Lifton that means he sees a tax exemption in doing that or can plug his coming book if he ever gets it done. I'm sure also he gave them what he has no need for and duplicates what they already had.

I doubt also that he has learned very much about Oswald that was not long known in any event.

Or, his problem may be making something out of nothing.

Nice as it would be if he has more than that.

Many thanks and hope you enjoy that week in Dallas.

Hal

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Nov. 12, 1996

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Dear Hal=

I had intended to write you as soon as I returned from the recent Washington conference but I wanted to wait until I received two important documents so that I could send you copies. The two documents were the ARRB Hearings held in L.A. on Sept. 17, 1996 and the other document was the abstract from a recent (July, 1996) conference held in Fredonia, N.Y. under the "Fourth Decade" auspices. With this letter I'm enclosing the ARRB Hearings (that of Liebler & Belin) plus excerpts from the Fredonia conference. I believe you'd be interested in. Also enclosed are other copies of items I know you'd be interested plus my letter I sent to "COPA" on how they treated me (badly) at the Washington conference.

~~Before I do get into this I wanted to ask you for the phone number of Colonel Castor (mentioned in your books). I met a researcher in ~~the~~ Washington who asked me for it as he believed it may be unlisted. I said I'd write you & find out if permission can be granted for this researcher to call him. I've no idea what he wants to ask~~

Caston but I did promise I'd write you.

You mentioned in your letter whether I'd be interested in your manuscript on Hosty ("Hosty's Pudding"). You may have forgotten but I already have a copy as you sent it to me some time ago. Incidentally, Jan Griggs British JFK journal will publish an article by me exposing both the Hosty "Assignment Oswald" book & the La Fontaine's work. That article is due to appear any day now & undoubtedly will be available in Dallas for the upcoming Lancer conference. It (I hope) will wake up people who ought to know better than to allow these 2 books to surface without a truly critical perspective. So far I've seen no real deep criticism of either with a few exceptions.

I'm glad to see that both you and your wife will be getting the Mary Ferrell award and, of course, I'll be there to hear it being presented. And I hope you can get a video done in time on yourself as some kind of acceptance speech. If you can't locate someone to do a video perhaps you can consult a video specialist or shop that would do it for you at a minimal cost. If that's not possible perhaps an audio tape can be made.

You mentioned about hearing that Livingstone was discussing his new book on the critics. You probably forgot but when I spoke to you on the phone I mentioned this to you. He wouldn't show me his manuscript.

I hope the enclosures on the Liebelin + Belin stuff will be useful for the "Honorable Men" book you're working on. I intend to use both of their "testimony" in an article

I'm working on which will be my observations on how the ARRB is conducting itself, my appearance at one of the hearings plus what I observed at the Sept. 17, 1996 hearing.

You asked if I had any word on Dave Lipton's new book and my answer is -no- nothing new yet. When I met Dave Lipton at the hearings in Los Angeles I specifically asked him as to how his book was doing and he dodged the question, I really don't know what his problems are with the book. Whatever he has would seem to me to have long been completed. Perhaps his publisher has objections to the text.

Now to get into a very brief outline of what went on at the recent Washington conference plus my brief meeting with an ARRB official who is listed as "Chief Analyst for Military Records".

I was impressed with the talk given by Kenneth Rahn, who is a professor of "Aerosol Chemistry". He has a background in neutron activation analysis & his talk was entitled "Good News on Neutron Activation." Although many who heard him speak claimed he upheld the Warren Commission's defense of Neutron Activation Analysis, I did not find this to be the case. (For example, one could conclude that because Rahn said that the samples analyzed by both the FBI & HSCA were capable of being the "same" he nevertheless pointed out that (a) we don't know what method of statistical analysis

they used, and (B) this was the FBI's first "foray" into NAA. I think one of the chief points Rahn made was that in NAA you can prove dissimilarity but you cannot prove similarity.

Randy Robertson who spoke again pointed to the evidence of double head shot and his talk was on the "Analysis of Skull Fragments Recovered." His main point was in discussing what he termed were "secondary fractures" as compared to "primary fractures." Since I'm not a medical person I could not offer other alternatives to the double head shot but no one in the audience did (and I'm sure there were medical people there to refute him but none did).

On Saturday night I attended the Banquet Dinner and as I told you on the phone the Sylvia Meagher awards were given to Bud Fensterwald (accepted by his son & wife, Tim Lesar, Robert Groden, and Peter Dale Scott. Harrison Livingstone was at the dinner and Groden told me "he passed nasty notes" to him. Also at the dinner was Josiah Thompson. Someone at my dinner table told me he heard Thompson at one point remark = "You know, half the people here are crazy."

There were other panels but I won't bore you with the details. These covered the Paine family & the other panel dealt with "Hidden Messages in the Media". The latter was a farce which attempted to "prove" that messages telling of an assassination attempt on JFK could be found by analyzing ads or even poems in important papers or magazines prior to November 22nd!!

Now I want to discuss my meeting with an ARRB representative, Timothy A. Wray, whose card reads "Chief Analyst for Military Records". I overheard Marwell say that he had recommended Wray for this position (I am not clear as to how long he's held this position). It could be that Marwell knew of Wray when Marwell was in Germany looking at German records. I just don't know.

I sat down with Wray in one of the offices of the ARRB. Present with me were John Judge, Roger Peterson and other members of COPA.

I asked Wray several questions relating to Oswald. Among the first was whether Wray had ever heard of "METO" which was some kind of operation being run out of Atsugi (and apparently all across the world) which I believe dealt with electronic (air) surveillance. Wray said no - he hadn't heard of it. I specifically asked Wray this because Wray's background is military and he went to West Point & worked under the Joint Chiefs of Staff (in the 1990's I believe). He appears to be about mid-40's but I can't say for sure how old he is.

I then asked if he had any further information on whether there was a CID at El Toro & he said no he hadn't, but he did know about what CID was all about.

I asked if he knew about what Col. Robert Jones had told the HSCA (about 8 men being assigned to Dallas on 11/22/63) & that these men were to say they

were "attached" to the Secret Service if any were approached. I pointed out that the records of these eight were somehow "lost".

I also asked Wray if he knew of a Capt. James Powell who took photos and that one has appeared showing the 6th floor window shortly after the assassination and where the other photos were. I said Powell (as well as Jones) were part of the 112th Military District and Wray said he knew of this.

As I was discussing both Jones & Powell, a kind of all-knowing smile crept across his face. He told me "you know, Mr. Verb - there is something peculiar about both these gentlemen". Both are misidentified by the HSCA as to their military ranks. I said how could this be since - as you well know when appearing as a witness you have to be very accurate in identifying yourself. Wray said the title Jones gave was inaccurate. Wray couldn't explain it, nor could I. We left it hanging there but I told him I'd write to him about this.

Wray also pointed out to me that James Powell is misidentified as a Captain. Wray said he was a Sergeant. I could ~~offer~~ offer no reason why this occurred, nor could Wray.

I asked Wray if he had been in touch with both Jones and Powell and he said, yes, he had. I asked Wray if Jones knew Powell & Wray said no -

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Jones did not know Powell. I then asked if Jones knew of Powell & Wray said - yes - he did know of Powell.

One interesting little tidbit that came out of my discussion with Wray on Powell is that at one point Wray volunteered the information that Powell is "a banjo player". I got the impression that Wray had conducted the interview with Powell at Powell's home, otherwise why bring up being a banjo player?

I don't know how much more to make of this but it does suggest more needs to be done about what Jones & Powell can tell us that could be significant. As far as I know no one else besides Wray has been in touch with these two.

If there are any questions you can think of before I write to Wray on Jones & Powell, let me know. Powell report, pp, records destruction.

Well, I guess I'll close now and I guess if I don't hear from you before I leave for Dallas (I'll be there from Wed. Nov. 20 through Wed. Nov. 27 and I'll be staying at the Dallas Grand Hotel.

Best regards to you and your wife!

- Hal