

Dear Hal,

12/27/96

I appreciate the time and work that went into your letter and thank you for both. My reply will be abbreviated by my typewriter needing a repair. I have this fine one Bill Mills got for me but much of it is strange and I'm used to doing things on the other one automatically.

The Elrod Talked fiction is no worth any time at all. The LaFs made it all up out of nothing. Literary whoring by subject-matter ignoramuses. I've a book length study of them and their book.

As that piece makes clear they've conned Marina into believing what they made up. I wrote her in advance but she is hooked so I'll waste no more time on that. She did not respond. I'm sure the LaFs arranged for that Oprah show to promote their bad book. She is hooked on it in her letter to the ARRB. But there was no snitch on that arrest. They wrecked their car speeding when police caught them speeding and they did not dare stop with those five stolen weapons in it. Five is a bid deal!

^{Glad} to get that Army intelligence stuff. I'd always believed something like that to explain the reports of SS credentials. The ATF boys had an office near there and those look like other Treasury credentials.

I do not believe some of the stuff on Hitchcock and that appears not to be a picture of her. She was wealthy, did not need money and if she'd wanted to sell the story she'd have done it earlier. No connection with any other story or book effort.

Most of those with theories are without fact. Particularly true of those who claim Z was altered. Seems to be impossible and to serve no end. Except for nuts building theories on it.

Lifton knows very well his theory is phony. He has been discussing alternative means of ^{on AFIP} hiding the body, which was impossible in any event. He had Livingstone's cop steal my work on that. You are right, it would have done no good to argue with him and could have done harm to you in his inevitable quest for vengeance.

I can understand he would not discuss his new book. But did he say when it will appear? That is what interests me.

Incredible that he could say, think of him as ^oColombo without the raincoat. Can he really believe that? I do not recall a single meaningful thing he has done. Not in years.

I have no recollection of Faswell and no recollection of any of Finck's notes disappearing. He did not say that in the notes he supposedly made to replace them. His reference to an assistant staff cannot have been to one at the autopsy. Must have been at AFIP.

When I tried to get Mantik's feet on the ground some time ago I did not hear from him again. His frame-moving theory is impossible. My first film examination was with my BLoex projector and I could and did stop it on each frame. Any examination of the film as distinguished from the slides makes this clear. He is wrong.

+Simply haven't done their homework. applies to most.

Brandt is a self-importaht-nut. Waste no more time on him.

Hemming makes it all up. And as I think you are beginning to perceive, Newman's word is not to be taken.

Marina's desire to do something can be understood but there is nobody near her who can talk reason to her. She has been fed all that nuttiness for years and knows nothing else. Shame but I know of nothing that can be done ^{about} it. I did try several times. No response.

I had a more definitive article on the LaFs that Debra asked for but it was delayed, she says. I assume that was their newest nut, Evica, who has his own nuttiness and it is awful. He actually solicited a paper on me as a government agent for a gathering of the third Decade nuts.

This machine is too much for me all of a sudden. Hope I can get my old one back tomorrow. I'll read and correct this then.

many thanks!
HCP

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HAL VERB
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12-17-96

HAROLD WEISBERG
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Dear Hal:

I'm taking advantage of a two week holiday from work (beginning today) to write you and tell you more about the JFK Cancer conference held in Dallas, this past November. One of the highlights, of course, was attending the Mary Fenell Awards night when you and your wife received an award plus your video commentary on accepting the award. I believe that now that you've received both an award from COPA and now Cancer you may well be the only such person to have accomplished this.

Of course there was a good deal that occurred at the cancer conference that should be forgotten but I'll try here in this letter to dwell on the positive aspects I picked up. You may have heard through the grapevine that I sort of caused a bit of a "stir" when I challenged 2 speakers on the alleged alteration of the Z-film. I'll get into this more as the letter continues. But it was clearly my feeling that the defenders of Z-film alteration are looking sillier & sillier as time goes on.

As you may or may not know the recent Cancer conference proved to be a vehicle for pushing (or promoting)

Dave Lipton & his "body alteration" theory. I saw no one in any of the panels (or audience) rejecting his notions & I must say that since I was part of that audience I raised no objections. In my case I felt it would do no good as I thought there were meatier areas to go after. I will always hold to his theory & will never admit error - I leave it at that. But in the case of others with their "off the wall" theories I feel I can put in my two cents worth.

Dave wouldn't discuss his new book other than to say that if he did he'd be in trouble with his publisher. I believe his book is called "The Three Faces of Lee Harvey Oswald."

Lipton continued his defense of his body alteration theory. I sensed from the audience reaction that they were politely listening but not all bought into it, but I have no doubt many did buy into it. (I wondered to myself though why, if the body was altered, would one want to consider Z-film alteration in addition?).

I know you'll find this amusing but at one point Lipton stated of himself - "Think of me as Colombo without the raincoat."

One very interesting sidebar to Lipton's comments was a video tape he showed of a fellow named Leonard Faswell. Apparently a week after the JFK murder, this Faswell who obtained a PhD in biochemistry) was sitting in a cafeteria one table away from Dr. Finch. Finch was with 2 other officers and was loudly complaining that "his notes are gone". The incident took place at Walter Reed Hospital. Lipton said Faswell had once worked at the AFIP which I took to mean the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology. From what I can recall this cafeteria room

was tied in with the Walter Reed AFIP program there but I'm uncertain as to this.

What Lipton maintained was that Finck was quite mad & loud about these "lost notes". Lipton said that Finck even got what staff he ~~had~~ had working at Bethesda to look for these "lost notes" but to no avail. They found nothing. According to Lipton Finck had to "reconstruct" the details of the autopsy in the form of "new" notes. This Finck accomplished in "several hours".

If all this is true there's no mention of Finck doing this that I can recall appearing either at the Warren Commission or the HSCA. And who would that assisting staff be Lipton refers to. All very odd but the Cancer conference will have a video soon to verify that Lipton did say what he did. And I'm confident my notes reflect accurately what he stated. Have you ever heard of this Leonard Faswell?

Now to get to my "encounter" with a panel discussing the Z-film. Virtually all panelists took the position of alteration. There was no one on the panels who took a position that the Z-film wasn't altered or even close to the position that it was impossible to alter the film. I understand that at the rival COPA conference taking place in Dallas (at the same time as Cancer's) Robert Groden got into a bitter argument with James Fetzer (who argued for alteration). Groden took the position the Z-film wasn't altered. So at two different meetings the Z-film was upheld as being of a fraudulent nature and except for myself & Groden little opposition to those defending the Z-film alteration line. And Fetzer was one of the panelists I voiced objections to when I

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told him I didn't believe in Z-film alteration. Fetyer then labelled me as being "irrational" & said something like: "Come on, Mr. Verb - get with it, Z-film alteration is a fact & it's time you knew it". There was a buzz that permeated throughout the audience as if I was stepping on too many toes & they wanted me to know it. It may sound paranoid on my part to have felt this but I definitely felt it!

Actually I mainly opposed Dr. David Mantik who was trying to "prove" alteration by pointing to alleged objects in Z frames being "magnified". His claim was this was being done to hide the "fact" of alteration. He even tried to show that the fatal head shot ~~had~~ occurred at Z-313 but was later (Z-316) & the frame ~~ingeniously~~ moved backward to be fixated at Z-313 instead. It was all very bad science & when I raised my hand to protest this I cited three errors in his presentation which I listed as (a) perspective, (b) Acoustics, and (c) First Shot Analysis.

~~He~~ Twice Mantik repeated that the first shot occurred in the Z-200+ above levels. Mantik had to publicly state he was in error on this & I cited both your work (even my work) on this showing a first shot being at about Z-189. I then said he had totally ignored acoustic readings & he said - yes, that's true - he forgot to mention this. Mantik was just out of his element when it comes to photographic analysis of the problem was that of all the panelists none were fit to discuss it from a photo-analyst point of view let alone from their own obviously unaware interpretations of the evidence. Again as I've often stated - they simply haven't done their homework.

Now to get to Cery Patrick Hemming who was a speaker for Lancer. This is the first time I'd ever seen him (I had him curtagraph a photo of him in military fatigues, which I believe was taken at No Name Key).

Here are some of the more memorable quotes that I've gleaned from my notebook & I know you'll find some of them interesting, if not amusing:

Hemming = "We had it made with John Kennedy
--- but he stepped on toes"

" = "Garrison helped prove that Marallo
didn't kill JFK."

" = (On why Oswald was sent to the Soviet
Union) = "Oswald was the 'fall guy' for
the U-2 failure"

(I don't believe this for a moment - this
sounds more like one of Hemming's wild speculations).

" = Hemming denied that he had called James
Angleton to discuss Oswald (this denial came
in response to a question by John Newman.

(Here I believe Hemming + it is possible
that Newman may have even believed that Hemming
had discussed Oswald with Angleton. This sounds
very much like Newman's thinking on the matter).

" = In a question to Hemming as to "When
was the last time you saw Oswald?"

Hemming replied = "With or Without Elvis!?!?"

(This sounds like the true "Hemming scoffing at
intimations he met a new Oswald).

Now as a final note, in your last letter to me
you asked me about the matter of Col. Robert F. Jones.

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assassination occurred (at age 9) she has always believed there was a conspiracy. I understand that Marina again said Lee was innocent + that Marina criticized the ARRB for its snail-paced work. One researcher wrote me & said Tenheim (of the ARRB) came out "looking real weak" on the program. Tenheim was given a chance to speak but so were Mary LaFontaine & James Hosty. I don't know what LaFontaine said or what Hosty said but it is my understanding that Marina has put full credence in the LaFontaine-Elwood-Oswald story & stands by it completely. If this is the case Marina must now also believe that Oswald was working very closely with Hosty as an informant. I just can't believe she's gone ahead & done this but if so it is all rather embarrassing. Is there anything one can do to get her on the right track again? I think all this very unfortunate but there must be something that can be done about it all, don't you think?

As far as the other enclosures, I thought you'd find it interesting the excerpts from the book, "Kennedy and his Woman", - the section dealing with Joan Hitchcock. The copy of the letter from E. Brandt which attacks me for believing in conspiracy. You may recall that Brandt is the witness I discovered in 1993 in Dallas. You can see Brandt in Z-202 & in Willott's. He's the one wearing a hat & his friend (John Templin) is also in both films. You'll note that Brandt doesn't realize the implications of his own observations - that there was a shot prior to 202, that it struck JFK which the Warren Commission says didn't occur that way.

-J-

Brandt is now a "docent" who now leads
6th floor tourists on guide tours to show how the Warren
Commission was all right after all. I doubt that
any visitors there would ever challenge him on his
own observations & show how totally in error he is as
to the conclusions.

Brandt's letter is the second he's sent me & I've
yet to respond to him. I think you're probably right
when you say that it wouldn't do any good to reply. He
knows the truth & that's it!

The article on the Stock Market reaction to
the JFK assassination is written by J. Marshall. Marshall
once collaborated with Peter Dale Scott on "Creative Politics".
Marshall once worked at the Oakland Tribune (my good
friend, Tom Sanders, knew him quite well). Marshall now
works with the S.F. Chronicle & I believe is the economics editor
or staff writer. I met him once.

I guess I'll close now & I do hope everything is
fine with you & your wife. I hope it will be an easy
winter for you. So far here it has been somewhat mild
& I wait for the days when Spring will finally arrive.

Best,
Hal Vert