

JOHN J. McCLOY
ONE CHASE MANHATTAN PLAZA
NEW YORK, N. Y. 10005

July 16, 1969

My dear Mr. Chief Justice:

Some time back I received the enclosed letter from Bernard Geis Associates and it irritated me so that I sat down and drafted a reply. I do not know whether you think it would be unwise to send off such a reply as this or not. At any rate, I would like your judgment on it and perhaps the best thing is to do nothing but acknowledge the letter. However, it seemed a little awkward to do this or indeed to ignore it.

I have been intending to write you to congratulate you on the accolades you have been receiving in connection with your retirement which took the form of what I believe is an unprecedented recognition of your services as Chief Justice of the Court. I know of no other case that equals it, and it must have warmed you greatly.

I hope things are going well with you and one of these days I will try to drop in to see you.

Sincerely,

Enclosures

Honorable Earl Warren
Supreme Court of the United States
Washington, D. C. 20543



P. S. I am holding up my reply, if any, until I get your judgment.

October 1, 1969

Honorable John J. McCloy,
One Chase Manhattan Plaza,
New York, New York 10005.

Dear Jack:

On my return from extensive traveling around the world, I found your letter of July 16th concerning the Thompson book on the assassination of President Kennedy.

I have given some thought to your contemplated reply to Bernard Geis Associates concerning the publication. You ask my opinion as to whether this letter should be sent. I make bold to say that I would not send it if I were you although I agree with every word in it.

To me, it is quite obvious that Mr. Geis is desirous of stirring up a controversy which will further the sale of the Thompson book and perhaps prompt other writing. The endorsements of the book which he quotes are obviously of passing comment and have not, as far as I know, stirred up any demand for a re-examination of the assassination. If members of the Commission could be led into a debate as to the reliability of Mr. Thompson's assessment of the facts as opposed to that of the Commission, there are plenty of people who would take sides for the sake of argument. Believing as I do that the Report is sound in its conclusions, I would not engage in any such controversy. On the other hand, if it should ever become a serious matter and responsible people who are objective in the matter need some enlightenment, I believe your letter would then be very much in order, and I personally would save it for such an occasion.

I am leaving again tomorrow for Europe and will be away throughout October, but I expect to return on November 5th. I hope that if at any time after that you are in Washington that we may have the opportunity for a visit.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

JOHN J. McCLOY
ONE CHASE MANHATTAN PLAZA
NEW YORK, N. Y. 10005

July 16, 1969

Dear Mr. Geis:

I have your letter of February 14th and I have also read Mr. Thompson's book, "Six Seconds in Dallas", with care.

I have not been impressed by its contents nor its conclusions, certainly not as a justification for a new investigation of President Kennedy's assassination.

I feel sure both you and Mr. Thompson will discount my comments as being prejudiced in favor of the acceptance of the report of the Warren Commission as a generally accurate account of what occurred in Dallas and the designation of Oswald as the assassin. You have, however, seen fit to ask for my comments and my advice and I am prepared to give them to you.

In the first place, I do not give the Thompson book much better marks than those of Mark Lane and a number of others which have appeared. It has an appearance of careful thought and research, but it is really unconvincing and in many respects misleading. Like its predecessors which have attempted to maintain different theses, it is compelled to ignore or disparage the main facts and torture bits of evidence to support a theory of conspiracy, which not only has not a shred of direct or substantial evidence to support it, but which runs counter to all reasonable deduction. The solidly established and really incontrovertible facts as to Oswald's guilt and the total absence of any real facts pointing to an associated conspiracy remain.

It is not impossible that a conspiracy was framed to accomplish the death of President Kennedy, but it is most

improbable that a conspiracy of the dimensions or character put forward by Mr. Thompson should have existed without any trace of its existence having surfaced even after all these years of comment, publicity and investigation.

The author must first destroy the Warren Report by claiming shoddy work (in contrast with his own) on the part of serious investigators and the Commission itself; it must discard, or treat of no consequence, the testimony of eye witnesses and Oswald's fellow employees in the building, and he must go a long way toward eliminating Oswald himself as other than a somewhat casual or insignificant participant, if that. Besides discounting Oswald's participation, he must discard or discount his wife's and Mrs. Paine's evidence, his three shots and his basic nature as a lone operator; he must discard or disparage the autopsy and its findings, including the subsequent re-examination of the x-rays by the Attorney General's panel which I believe took place in 1968 in connection with the Garrison case against Shaw; he must discard and discount the Walker incident and, finally, he must build up again the very flimsy and highly questionable evidence regarding a "puff of smoke" from the "grassy knoll" in order to arrive at the conclusions which, according to the publisher and the reviewers, must for "the safety of the Republic" demand a new investigation of the Kennedy murder.

The original Zapruder film was seen by some, if not all, members of the Commission and the frequent replay of the copy before the Commission was quite sufficient to portray the main facts of the sequence of the original film.

The Zapruder film shows the President pitching forward and then jerking backward -- a not uncommon phenomenon of gun shot wounds in the head as not only forensic physicians testify to but those who have experienced the same phenomenon in combat. But this is not the time nor the place to analyze in detail Mr. Thompson's renewed effort to establish an elaborate conspiracy where Garrison, with Mark Lane's help, so conspicuously failed. One could go on at far too great length for the purposes of this letter.

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In short, I do not believe Mr. Thompson's book gives any real basis for a demand for a new investigation and, I believe, a new investigation without any new and significant disclosures would not be in the interest of either the truth, the proprieties, or the welfare of the nation. If you apply unbiased objective judgment (not those of a crusading editor), I believe you will realize that no good service would be done the people of the United States or, as I say, justify the trauma of putting on another Garrison-like fiasco in the absence of any more convincing evidence than Mr. Thompson's strained though, I am sure, sincere effort can produce.

Too much evidence must be unjustly discounted, discarded or disparaged even to create the minimal basis for such an investigation. The expert panel which examined the x-rays under the auspices of the Department of Justice last year clearly disprove the main Thompson contentions and certainly the original autopsy report even if it is somewhat less exacting and comprehensive than one might have wished it to be does so as well.

Short of some new evidence of this character, I believe a rehash of the old theories and conjectures would only recreate false doubts, produce more profitable books, more superficial reviewers and the truth would be submerged.

I send you this letter not for publication, but merely to respond to your personal request for my opinion.

Sincerely,



Mr. Bernard Geis
Bernard Geis Associates
130 East 56th Street
New York, New York 10022

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ASSOCIATES
PUBLISHERS.



130 EAST 56th STREET, NEW YORK 10022 . PLAZA 2-1975

February 14, 1968

Mr. John McCloy
Millbank, Tweed and McCloy
1 Chase Manhattan Plaza
New York, New York

Dear Sir:

As an erstwhile member of the Warren Commission, you will, I am sure, be especially interested in the storm of controversy that has been stirred up anew since the publication in late November of the enclosed book, SIX SECONDS IN DALLAS by Josiah Thompson. Professor Thompson bases his startling conclusions on concrete evidence that was unavailable to the Commission -- for example, precise measurements and detailed observations made from the clear Life copy of the Zapruder film instead of a murky, second generation copy of a copy made available to the Commission.

These measurements and observations prove beyond reasonable doubt that Governor Connally was struck by a second bullet that could not have come from Oswald's rifle and that the final, devastating wound smashed the President's head backward and to the left, a reaction not compatible with a shot fired from the rear.

As a result of this book, more than for any other reason, the pivotal findings of the Report have been seriously challenged by concerned Americans.

I am enclosing a few salient comments selected from many that have appeared recently in magazines and newspapers from coast to coast. Please look them over, noting especially that all press for a reopening of the investigation. We believe that they will prove of the gravest concern to you, as they are to us.

The nation cannot accept the notion that "The real facts will never be known." Because there is no Federal body presently constituted to examine these new findings, we turn to you. We earnestly hope that you will be moved to urge the

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formation of a Congressional body or an independent committee of scholars, critics, pathologists and criminologists empowered to probe these hypotheses, refuting them if additional evidence warrants, or expanding upon the original Report if that should prove necessary.

In fact, we would very much like to be helpful to you in any way possible in quelling these doubts. If you have any suggestions for us about how we can proceed, we would be deeply grateful.

Sincerely,

Bernard Geis

BG/jp