

Mr. Roy Wicker
Austin Hill Farm
Rochester, VT 05767

2/25/92

Dear Mr. Wicker,

Thanks for finding the time to respond. I'm pleased that you remember our conversations of so many years ago. I'm sorry it was not possible for me to try to talk to you later when I began to study the Commission's records and by a series of FOIA lawsuits got about a third of a million ^{FBI, DJ, etc. and other} pages. I learned much and while I leave this abundant archive at local Hood College I fear the volume alone precludes effective uses of it.

My purpose in starting the exposure of Stone's crass and unhidden commercialization and exploitation of the JFK assassination was to leave a record for history. If I had been up to a book and could have had it published rapidly the history of the movie might have been different. If you know anyone who would like to write about this commercialism and exploitation I have more than enough on that alone.

Meanwhile, I believe there is more than enough for any future assessment of what he did that is publicly available.

You are correct in believing that people, the young in particular, "accept it as fact." This was Stone's misrepresentation of it from the first and consistently thereafter.

While I doubt that you'll be writing more about this from what you say, I suggest that it is the wrong approach to criticize Stone, as Anthony Lewis and others did, by citing the Warren Report. There now is virtually nothing in the Report that can be accepted, from the Commission's own records and those I got from the executive agencies.

Some years ago I published two Commission memoranda on Warren's explanation to the staff of why he took the job when he knew he should not; to prevent 40,000,000 incinerations. Telling him that is how LBJ twisted his arm. The executive session transcripts I have make it clear that the Commission decided long before its first hearings that it would conclude there had been no conspiracy. They were well aware that this was the FBI's decision and they confessed their fear of the FBI to each other.

The FBI actually controlled the Commission from the outset, once Hoover failed to prevent its creation. I have a history professor friend who is writing a book on that largely from records I've given him. Whether or not the Commission ever got wind of it, and I think it did not, the FBI immediately prepared dossiers on the members and the staff and updated those on the staff when the report was issued. (It prepared "sex dossiers" on the critics.) Hoover even prevented Warren's appointment of his own choice, Warren Olney, as general counsel. Byzantine!

In some ways the House assassins committee was worse. I was the credited and uncredited source of stories critical of it by Wendell Rawls, John Crewdson and possibly others at the Times, Lardner at the Post and in the St. Louis Post Dispatch and other papers.

Best wishes, Harold Weisberg

Harold Weisberg

Feb. 19, 1992

Dear Mr. Weisburg:

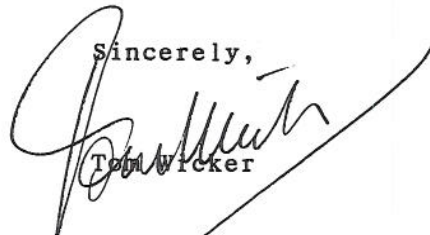
I remember you very well and our conversations of many years ago. I have been tardy in answering your letter, not because I didn't welcome it, but because I retired from The Times on Dec. 31, consequently had much mail and paperwork to attend to, and got away as soon as I could on a short trip to Mexico. Oliver Stone, not content with denouncing me in The Times and every forum he can find, followed me there (not, I suppose, on purpose) and told Mexico City fans that JFK had been killed in a "fascist coup." He did not explain, of course, why Earl Warren took part in a fascist coup, or why the attorney general at the time never uncovered or remarked upon, then or later, this aspect of his brother's death.

I had my say about the Stone film in The Times, and I'm glad you found it worthwhile. But it's a losing fight. Just today I heard Stone had been nominated for an Academy Award; he'll probably get it. His film is exciting and wellmade -- even if dishonest in its concept, deceitful in its unfolding, and fraudulent in its hero. That Stone based it on Jim Garrison's fantasies is in itself proof of its utter lack of credibility, and of Stone's abysmal failure to check up on anything.

My impression, however, is that the film has won widespread public acceptance, and that young people in particular accept it as fact, despite its wild incongruities. The general climate of distrust of government contributes to this acceptance, and in turn is heightened by it. That film seems to me the broadest act of "artistic" irresponsibility of my time.

I know George Lardner as a reliable reporter, and none of your account of your dealings with Oliver Stone surprised me. I appreciate your good wishes, and your offer of help if I plan to take this matter further -- but I don't, as I think it's fruitless to try to counter the impact of a Hollywood film with such drama, however manufactured. I said to an intelligent and sophisticated lady in Mexico City that Garrison was a fraud; to which, thinking of Kevin Costner, she replied: "Oh, but he's so cute!"

Sincerely,



Tom Wicker