

**Wrone, David**

*From Briggs of Kansas Press to me*

**From:** Mike Briggs [mbriggs@newpress.upress.ukans.edu]  
**Sent:** Monday, August 28, 2000 4:33 AM  
**To:** dwrone@uwsp.edu  
**Subject:** Doug Horne on Anna Nelson

David:

I received the following via Mike Kurtz. Thought you'd the comments interesting as well. (Too bad they involve an author in one of our books getting slammed. But, I tend to agree that Anna Nelson's piece is weak in places.) Anyway read and consider.

Mike

----- Forwarded Message Follows -----

**Date:** Mon, 28 Aug 2000 08:34:47 -0500  
**From:** Michael Kurtz <mkurtz@selu.edu>  
**Subject:** FW: Important Message From Doug Horne  
**To:** mbriggs@newpress.upress.ukans.edu

Mike:  
FYI.  
Mike

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**From:** JFK News <debra@jfkclancer.com>  
**To:** List Member <mkurtz@selu.edu>  
**Subject:** Important Message From Doug Horne  
**Date:** Fri, Aug 25, 2000, 8:43 AM

JFK News - <http://jfkclancer.com>

Below is an important message from Doug Horne written in response to a message from Dr. David Mantik. Thanks to Doug and David for sharing this information.

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**Date:** Fri, 25 Aug 2000  
**Subject:** The Errors of Anna Kasten Nelson, Former ARRB Board Member

David,

Thanks for mailing me chapter 10 of the <sup>1999</sup>1989 book edited by Athan G. Theoharis, "A Culture of Secrecy," which is written by Anna K. Nelson and is titled "The John F. Kennedy Assassination Records Review Board." I am including others on this e-mail who I feel should know about the overt bias and misinformation Dr. Nelson published in this chapter, for to the extent that it is representative of the general tilt of all 5 of the Board Members, it may explain a lot about the Review Board's actions (or failures to act) during the 4 years it was in session.

I will quote the sentences you highlighted and asked me to comment on, and then comment:

NELSON: "The act was designed to strip away theories that implicated federal agencies in a conspiracy to murder the young president." (Page 211)

[Mantik question: "Does the Act really say this?"]

Horne's comments: Simply not true, and an appalling statement, considering that it comes from a former Board member. This may be what motivated many members of Congress to vote for the act, and it may be what motivated its primary drafter (Robert Blakey), but this language of Anna

Nelson's is not at all faithful to the language in the act itself. The language of the act states that it was designed to locate and then release (within certain stated guidelines) as many federal assassination records as possible, and to then place them in a special collection at the National Archives, so that the American people could decide for themselves (on an individual basis) what to conclude about the assassination.

For Anna Nelson to write this indicates a terrible amount of bias on her part---a blatant assumption that all theories that implicated any Federal agencies were not only wrong, but were "bad," and therefore necessitated the creation of this agency to cleanse the body politic of these "dirty, unclean" ideas. It also implies that in the exercise of her duties, she may not have been an unbiased, neutral broker during her 4 years at the ARRB.

I should point out that during the Senate hearings on the act before its passage, Senator Arlen Specter (a man with much intellectual territory---namely, the Single Bullet Theory---to defend, and a strong advocate of the Warren Report) said he was more than willing to support passage of the act and "let the chips fall where they may." [I never thought I would be promoting and defending a statement of Arlen Specter's over that of an ARRB Board Member!] On one occasion I witnessed myself, when a White House official stated at a public government hearing on declassification issues that "it was the Review Board's mission to discredit ridiculous rumors and theories," the ARRB Chief Counsel, Jeremy Gunn, publicly took the official to task and corrected him, stating that the role of the JFK Act was simply to identify and release records and place them in the Archives so that the American people can better draw their own conclusions about the assassination. The White House official had a distinctly unpleasant look on his face, but Jeremy Gunn was right.

My final comment is: people from both sides of the spectrum of beliefs re: the assassination voted in favor of the act's passage---both the Warren Report believers, because they thought there was nothing to hide; as well as those who believed in or suspected a conspiracy, because they suspected there were many vital secrets and facts hidden in the classified federal records.

If Anna's statement were true, then it would mean that the JFK Act and all of the Review Board's activities were a mere exercise in public relations (at best), or perhaps even a cover-up (at worst). As someone who moved from Hawaii to Washington at his own expense to work on the ARRB staff because I believed in pursuing the truth no matter where it led me, and who also took a 42% pay cut to do so, I find this statement extremely offensive, because it tarnishes in the minds of others the hard work I did for three years, from 1995-1998.

NELSON: "How do five individuals deliberately chosen for their unfamiliarity with Kennedy assassination documents, arguments, and theories carry out their legal mandate?" (Page 216)

[Mantik question: "Did the Act require ignorance?"]

Horne's comments: No, not by any means. The Act simply required that no Board member or Staff member could have worked for any previous investigation or panel that investigated or dealt with the murder; i.e., the Warren Commission, the Clark Panel, the Rockefeller Commission, or the HSCA.

Two professional historical societies, the ABA, and the White House chose the 5 different Board members, in accordance with the JFK Act's provisions. If the 5 Board Members selected happened to not know very much about the assassination (which was indeed the case), or to exercise a bias against the possibility of conspiracy, it reflected the natural bias of the groups that nominated them, that's all. Those same nominating groups could just as well have nominated self-educated "experts" in the JFK assassination (from both sides of the fence) to be Board Members, had they wanted to. To recap, the JFK Act did not require ignorance of the assassination in those selected to be Board Members...but that is what the American people got. And the Senate confirmed them.

NELSON: "Assassination aficionados seeking the "smoking gun" document(s) will be disappointed."

[Mantik question: "How does she know this (in April 1997) without first reading all the documents?"]

Horne's comments: I can think of several "smoking gun" documents right now, off hand, just by memory:

(a) The Top Secret FBI report sent to LBJ in December 1966 indicated that the KGB secretly briefed its New York office in 1965 that it had evidence that Lyndon Johnson was responsible for the assassination of President Kennedy.

(b) Inspector Thomas Kelley of the U.S. Secret Service wrote a memo on February 14, 1964 which stated that if, in the future, the FBI were allowed sole jurisdiction over investigations of Presidential assassinations, that a "venal" FBI director could single-handedly control the investigation, and "we could have another Seven Days in May situation." ["Another?"]

(c) The sworn testimony of JFK autopsy photographer John Stringer to the ARRB in the summer of 1996 conclusively proved that the photographs of "a brain" in the JFK Collection in the Archives could not be the photographs he shot at a post-autopsy supplemental brain exam---essentially proving that the brain photos in the archives are not of President Kennedy's brain, but rather some other brain.

(d) The sworn testimony of former FBI agent Frank O'Neill to the ARRB in September of 1997 indicated that the brain photos in the Archives could not be Kennedy's brain because at autopsy, JFK's brain "was over half gone."

(e) The sworn testimony of former FBI agents O'Neill and Sibert to the ARRB in September of 1997 indicated that the JFK autopsy photographs of an intact back of the head were incorrect, i.e., inconsistent with the large posterior defect they remembered seeing at the autopsy.

(f) Numerous OPLANS released to the ARRB by the Pentagon revealed that the U.S. Military (i.e., the Chairman of the JCS, Lyman Lemnitzer) was openly advocating a U.S. military invasion of Cuba before the October 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. Other staff papers generated in 1962 and 1963 at the one-star level within the Pentagon, recommended that the U.S. invent and employ several ingenious pretexts for an invasion of Cuba with overwhelming U.S. force.

*already public*

(g) The sworn testimony of Dr. James J. Humes to the ARRB in 1996 indicated that the A-P head x-ray of the President shown to him at the deposition in 1996 did not look the same as he remembered it looking on the night of the autopsy in November 1963. Specifically, the x-ray shows a large metal (bullet) fragment today which Humes does not remember seeing on the x-ray during the autopsy---nor does he remember searching for any such fragment on the body; furthermore, the x-ray shows other characteristics that Humes did not remember seeing at the autopsy, and which he did not understand when viewed in 1996. [The implications of his remarks are that the present x-ray could be a partial forgery.]

I could go on and on, but the above is sufficient to prove that Anna Nelson is just plain wrong on this count. Or more precisely, the relative importance of a document is in the mind of the researcher or historian, and is determined by his or her knowledge, filters, world view, etc.

Finally, I do not know how anyone could say this without reading all of the documents, either. Another Board Member, Dr. Kermit Hall, more accurately stated at the ARRB's sunset news conference that "the real impact of the ARRB's work could not be estimated for at least ten years." Now, that is a statement I can respect.

Please give this the widest possible dissemination.

Doug Horne ARRB Staff Member, August 1995-September 1998

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Michael