

Wrone letter to Journal of American History June 12, 1991

Begin with ending

Draft

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Editor

Journal of American History

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To the Editor:

Cynthia A. Brandimarte's review of the Dallas County Historical Foundation's exhibit on the assassination of President John F. Kennedy and its investigation reveals the necessity for subject matter knowledge of this complex crime not merely public history expertise when making evaluations..

When describing the assassination scene she omitted what most historians usually do (and presumably so too the Dallas museum folk) one of the individuals wounded that day, citizen James T. Tague. The place he stood near the triple underpass and the time of his wound are incompatible with

official findings that a single person fired all shots that day. The "glass" bubble removed from the limousine was actually plexi-glass, stored in the trunk, and in any event was a weather shield and absolutely no protection from a bullet.

The reference to "Mary Woorman," is a typographical error for Mary Moorman who snapped a Polaroid picture from the interior of the plaza toward the north grassy knoll. It was imperative for the reviewer to have critically noted which of the three basic forms of the photograph the museum chose to display. a) The Warren Commission copy provided by the FBI has been shown through professional analysis to have been expertly blackened along the edge of the fence running in the background atop the knoll. b) [attention harold, not clear on date and source here] In 1965 a critic obtained an excellent clear ^{or} photograph that the Dallas Police immediately had taken of ^{made from} the original. (The FBI had also ^{were simple immutability} taken one.) At the place where fakery shows on the official evidentiary photograph the unaltered one depicts a man behind the fence in what seems to be a classic firing position. Contrary to current commercial exploitation, the man's location and the time his shot would fit in the shooting sequence is incompatible with the firing of a shot in the assassination. He cannot be an assassin.

c) Over time and exposure Polaroid pictures fade into blank sheets. In 1978 the House Select Committee on Assassinations avoided the clear permanent copy to make a

careful study of the ^{faded} whited original. It solemnly concluded the Polaroid did not contain sufficient evidence to enable a finding to be made, all the time utilizing the FBI as investigators. *Did it set?*

To merely relate that the exhibit says small extremist groups were active in the community imparts the impression of some exotic fringe political activists and ought to have been accompanied with critical judgment of the obscurant nature of the phrase and the disservice the exhibit does to the American and Dallas scene. A few days before November 22 a para-military group known as the Minute Men met in secret session thirty miles north of Dallas and vowed to kill President Kennedy when he came to Texas. Warren Commission Executive Document 710, not published but officially listed as the number assigned but not used, relates the informant account of the meeting. In the time frame of the murder there were at least two threats on his life from elements of the National States Rights Party. A tape recording exists of an anti-Castro Cuban public meeting in Dallas where threats were made to kill him, *when he came. Several in Miami this motorcade LG to*

While no known evidence connects any of these threats upon the president's life with the murder, they were never investigated by federal authorities. Other threats in Texas, New Orleans and Miami are known, ^{of small} the one in Miami taken seriously by the ^{secret service} police who forced JFK to helicopter to his speech rather than motorcade. An exhibit even mildly interested in a valid picture of the era ought to have

provided the public with a panel or two on this facet of the milieu that by no standard qualifies as extremist and ought not have slavishly mirrored the federal investigators desired views. It would have of course made the assassination museum seem oddly placed in an old Book Depository.

The photograph and the caption contain errors. The Dallas Foundation does not faithfully reproduce the sixth floor perch of the assassin in the Texas School Book Depository. The evidence does not exist to do this. As they testified before the Warren Commission Dallas officials upon entering the floor in a search almost immediately began moving around the boxes and raised and lowered the window before photographs were taken. Even the official photographs taken later clash with one another in major ways. The final artificial scenario decided upon by the Warren Commission absolutely physically refutes its own eyewitness testimony, which is gotten around by accepting both as legitimate. A reviewer ought not gloss over the central question of the integrity of the objects displayed, *Dellark* to the evidence.

The photograph should also have been labeled "Lee Harvey Oswald's alleged perch," in the language Cynthia Brandimarte employs in the text. One central issue in the controversy over President Kennedy's death is the relationship of Oswald to the murder. Serious scholarship finds no credible evidence connecting Oswald to the sixth floor or to the murder--that is, fingerprints, eyewitnesses, physical factors, carrying the rifle to work, and so forth in the kit

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bag of the federal solution upon careful scrutiny immediately break down as untenable. At the same time credible evidence in the official records removes Oswald from the sixth floor.

Almost all commentators on the assassination avoid this question and focus on theories rather than on the integrity of the facts of the charges against Oswald. For the Dallas County Historical Foundation to erect a museum on the sixth floor of the Book Depository is an assertion that consciously devised myth is reality; it is not history.

In her references to the various investigations she means by the House Select Commission the House Select Committee. Her grouping the several investigative bodies into one sentence obscures the quite different nature of the commissions and committees, the former from the executive branch and the latter the legislative with distinct mandates. She omits panels, investigations by agencies, special scientific teams, and departments. All told the federal government conducted over twenty-five investigations and well over one hundred Freedom of Information Act lawsuits have been filed in addition to twenty other federal legal cases, some of them were fifteen years in duration. One case generated over three feet of documents on the ballistic evidence hotly contested by the government. A six minute film and a few boards cannot even have time and space to list their names let alone pretend to draw appropriate inferences on the results of these complicated inquiries.

The reviewer as well as the Dallas museum have fallen

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into the conventional view avidly promoted by the those who wish to commercialize the tragedy and the egotist "writer-experts" loose in the media and publishing pastures who see two basic positions on the assassination, the official finding and theories. A third is ignored. Throughout the many years of controversies responsible critics have diligently sought the evidence and its right definition in a struggle against the propaganda of both the wretched theorists and the federal conclusion which is itself merely a theory.

*That
as what
true
historian
do not
ignore*

Deeply informed responsible critics who work with the evidentiary base who have viewed the exhibit do not find it to be "intelligent," but see it as most irresponsible, the work of ignorant mythologists who have blindly affirmed official doctrines and peddle them daily to tourists as "history."

Finally, I disagree that the purpose of history or an exhibit of this nature is to heal. What is to be healed? Is it the outrage over the fact the Warren Commission wrote its conclusion and outline of its Report before it began its "investigation"? Or, is it the realization that every institution of society from media to politics failed to function properly during the crisis of the death of the executive? How can these elements be healed? I would encourage her to see that the end of history is to define the world in its meaning wherever that path might lead and

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at whatever cost it might entail to person, society, past,
and present as the only enprincippling ground to civic action.

David R. Wrone

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Dear Dave,

6/20/91

We have returned from a long and tiring day, this time I'm more tired and with a delayed supper I can write. The check on my eye at Hopkins was good and on the legs OK but only on the basis of adequate blood pressure. Which I hope is enough!

And I have to go back Monday. There is a new experimental treatment for reducing the size on an enlarged prostate. The hematologist who has been so very helpful to me made an appointment for me. Unfortunately, not with the men involved in the reported use there. But because it is apparent that the job will have to be done again, any cutting representing a special problem to me, I am happy to be in a position to make the request and suggest that I am the kind of patient who can expand the potential usefulness of the new medicine, really not a medicine but I don't know the correct term.

So I've lost a day, soon will lose another, and today's mail alone is a stack.

I am therefore more hurried in commenting on your proposed letter to the Journal of History. Which I believe you wrote in too great haste from some of the things I picked up. I read her crap first, with a highlighter, then read your letter.

Most of all I believe you should begin with the ending, with the addition I've noted, on what the true historian is.

Then I think you should go into the unwisdom of the concept. It meant inevitably that history consists of the official mythology, with an attempt at balance by including unofficial mythologies in a minor role. I don't know that you want to include it but you did not mention the Texas Court of Inquiry.

I think you should say that this article, the ignorance of basic fact reflected in it and in the editing which did not pick that error up, is the unfortunate reality of the failure of professional historians to make the required inquiry and in this perpetuate the official mythology, this disgracing the profession and the nation,

To whom did they send this with any factual knowledge, which is supposed to be the practise - nobody. ^{any} ~~an~~ authentic subject ^{want} would have seen the errors and flaws. Is that the way to run the Journal Of History? Did it not trivialize the subject?

This is too long and with too much of less than great significance. Is Moorman that important to jeopardize appearance?

On page 5 I can't follow what is highlighted.

Her article, 268, referring that that tinselled propagandizing of the official mythology ^{as} "the Memory of the Nation" of JFK is obscene and indecent. If those who created it did not know of the substantial information disproving the official story there were ignorant and could not have implemented serious, historical purposes. If they were not this ignorant, then there we no more than propagandists or community commercializers exploiting the word "history" in the name they took.

269, the author "who thinks and writes about history", perish the thought with this as an illustration,, apparently does not remember history, like of Galileo and the Salem

witches and how often officials have been so very wrong. She proceeds to misuse history by saying that "official investigations determined" that Oswald fired all the shots from there. They did no ~~xx~~ such thing. They theorized, or concluded but they did not and could not "determine" what was false. For example, the FBI and the Secret Service both disagree with the Commission's conclusions that the first shot struck both JFK and Connally.

What kind of "scholars" could the NEH have "brought together" who had the faintest knowledge of the fact of the official investigations and the disproofs? None?

"Clothes dryers and air conditioning" were then not "innovations" for most Americans. Both were "innovated" decades earlier and were in common use.

270 "glass bubble."

As I recall, it was not "a group of conservative businessmen" who took the ad out. Instead they paid the costs of the ad prepared by extreme extremists, *who "took it out."*

Moorman did not take her picture "as a bullet struck the President's head." One ought ask why she or the exhibit says this when it is so clearly seen on Z 313.

271 Altgens was not a "itness standing" in Dealey Plaza, He was an ~~AP~~ ^{AP} photographer who moved around in taking them and took one of the most important of the still pictures.

There was only one fatal shot". *Shm says "shots"*

272. The "area" does not address the ~~affair~~ "the investigations." It is basically the lone-nut assassin official investigations and the irresponsible conspiracy theorizings, which are not investigations. Moreover, one of the official investigations, HSCA, concluded that there had been a conspiracy. I think you noted that she calls commissions committees and committees commissions.. (I emphasizing ignorance as historical expertise.)

"Exhibition planners do not embrace one particular view." The hell they don't. They pretended that there is nothing other than official and unofficial mythologies

273. How in the world could it be possible for that exhibit to "assist future historians to interpret the meaning of this part of history to our nation and the world" when *it* is so insubstantial, so faulted, and does not address any of the many consequences of that assassination, which had the effect of a coup d'etat in any event?

I'm returning both your draft and her crap so you can see the highlightings and notes. When you are finished I'd like a copy of each for file.

I'm also enclosing a copy of an archeological article sent by a friend who had earlier reported the finding of rocks engraved ^{in Hebrew} with the decalogue prior to Columbus. When you have read them, if it interests you, please send to my friend Rabbi S.M. Silver, 2475 West Atlantic Ave., Delray Beach, FL 33445. He may have some knowledge of those findings and might tell us.

Best to all,

Harold