

3/20/70

Dr. James B. Rhoads, Archivist
The National Archives
Washington, D.C. 20408

Dear Dr. Rhoads,

Having just gone over the "preliminary inventory", I write you about it, with questions and with what I hope you can accept as constructive criticism.

There is editorializing which I believe is out of place in such a document. I would expect such a paper to be restricted to simple fact about which there is and can be no question. It should not contain value judgments, should not offer opinions on performance. And I strongly protest the inclusion as part of the "Records of the President's Commission" of such object works of sycophancy as the CBS shows of 1967. They have no place in such an archive, certainly not as part of official files, and your inclusion, it seems to me, of such over-advertised triviality, requires at the very least that you also incorporate all works critical of the government's accounting of the crime. In the past I have complained that your agency has acted as a partizan, not an impartial custodian of a precious national heritage. This is but another example of what leads to this feeling.

I suggest the "Introduction" is an inadequate reflection of the Commission's mandate. If you deem it necessary to incorporate such a commentary, it should be complete. In saying that Oswald was arraigned "within 12 hours of his arrest" you may have had the best intentions, but that he was arraigned at all on the second charge can be disputed by probative evidence in your custody. It likewise is inappropriate to say the arraignments (there are said to have been two) were "On the basis of evidence provided by Federal, State and local agencies" or that the limited things that can taken to be referred to "caused many people to...to suspect the existence of a...conspiracy".

The language on page three, not essential to an inventory, can be taken to affirm that the Commission did "conduct a thorough and independent investigation". Both are subject to at least question, and when the Commission had no single investigator of its own on its staff or working for it, this kind of formulation is particularly unfortunate and can, by those who have studied this matter deeply, be taken as no more than propaganda. I will undertake to debate with any you select whether the Commission's work was thorough and whether its investigation was independent. In any event, where is the relevance of such argument in an inventory, a guide to scholars? Cannot you permit those who study your archives to reach uninfluenced conclusions of their own?

On pages 3 and 4 there is reference to the seeking of data from four Congressional committees. I did not note receipt of any itemized. If there is any material from such Committees, may I please be referred to it? Which are these committees?

Also unfortunate and inappropriate is the inaccurate and misleading

