

Duplicate

12/12/68

To: Louis Ivon and James Alcock
From: Harold Weisberg
Subject: Brian Ampolsk

I have given you copies of the FBI report on Brian Ampolsk, who saw and had an intimate conversation with Oswald several days before the Canal - Street arrest. This report was not published by the Warren Commission, was not followed further by the FBI, and does reflect an unusual intimacy. When the FBI was allegedly looking for Oswald* associate, there is no indication Ampolsk was questioned about this or whether or not he volunteered this. I believe that if Oswald told Ampolsk such things as the time of his father's death, it is probable he told him other things of pertinence.

Yesterday I phoned him. There is ^{No} phone listed in his name, ~~that~~ that of his father is 887-9663 (1418 Haring Rd., Metairie). I spoke to someone I take to be a brother and learned that Brian is now in Baton Rouge, working for the State. His phone there is 334-8792.

Last night I received a phone call from a man identifying himself as Brian's father. He said the son was coming out of a long illness, apparently mental, and the father would prefer the entire thing be forgotten. He says he is worried about his son's health. If I were a public official, like the FBI, he said, that would be okay. But because I am a writer he does not want me to speak to his son.

I told him that although there is no official connection, I have been working with Garrison's office. I suggested that particularly if there were a question of his son's health, an informal interview might be desirable, more to Brian's interest. Ampolsk said this was a poor way of doing things. I suggested perhaps he had not thought this through. I told him that others preferred an informal approach when it was possible.

I also suggested that Brian might have disclosed some of what he knows to those close to him, like the family. His blunt and very fast negative response convinces me Brian ^{did} ~~did~~ Ampolsk gave me to understand that the illness is due to the effect of the assassination on Brian. This also suggests to me that Brian does have knowledge, that the FBI filed a report to keep itself in the clear yet said nothing, to hide him and his knowledge. It simply is not credible that Brian was so affected by the assassination he went into a five-year mental illness and yet had no pertinent knowledge.

The father said that if I, as I said I would, informed your office of our conversation, he would then consult Brian's psychiatrist. He did not say doctor; he did say psychiatrist. He again said any talk would not be in his son's interest, forgetting he had already approved had I been FBI. It is therefore obvious other considerations than his son's health influence the father.

I asked him consider that a major crime had been committed, that it was being properly investigated by the only public official with the legal

responsibility for conducting such an investigation, and he had already approved the interview by an official. He then, abruptly, said he was very busy, rather unusual at night and with his son's health allegedly so heavy on his mind, and the conversation ended when I said good night.

Interestingly enough, Ampolsk never once suggested that his son had no knowledge that was pertinent. His attitude boils down to this; an interview of his son by federal authority would not in any way endanger his son's health, but one by the Orleans Parish District Attorney's Office would. This is palpably nonsense and tends to destroy the credibility of his appeal. I did assure him that I would not approach his son, and I have not.

I think the father's bluff could be called by asking him to release the psychiatrist from his obligation to hold what the son told him secret. I cannot believe that the assassination had so serious an effect on the young man and his psychiatrist not having to explore it in depth. If the father is unwilling to do this, it would seem to me there would not be a proper invocation of his son's health as a block to his questioning.

It is also likely that the psychiatrist may have the most elaborate records of what the patient told him. Is this not more likely if the illness were of the duration claimed by the father?