

McCarthy letter urges probe of JFK murder while Bobby ducks Garrison subpoena

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This week the Free Press has obtained a file of letters from Senator Eugene McCarthy, numerous other senators and congressmen as well as Robert Kennedy aides, on the question of reopening the investigation of the John F. Kennedy murder.

The letter from Senator McCarthy, published in full below, is particularly timely because of McCarthy's Los Angeles speech today (Friday) on the "American Dilemma" at the Town Hall of California.

The letters, written to Steve Burton, Chairman of the Citizen's Committee of Inquiry, Perry Owen, a teacher in Ventura, California, and Fred T. Newcomb of

Sherman Oaks, California, are also important in light of Robert Kennedy's recent statement in Los Angeles that he is satisfied with the conclusions of the official Warren Commission investigation into the murder of his brother. The Los Angeles statement by Bobby was his first public comment on the Warren report.

Meanwhile, the New Orleans States-Item has disclosed that Bobby has asked Louisiana Governor John McKeithen to prevent any service of a subpoena on him by District Attorney Jim Garrison when Kennedy appears in New Orleans this week for a university-sponsored speech. An agreement was reached last weekend between Garrison and the governor that no subpoena would be served on Kennedy.

Garrison has issued numerous subpoenas in his probe of the JFK murder, including one to former Central Intelligence Agency Director Allen Dulles and one on Life Magazine asking for a copy of the Zapruder motion picture film of the assassination.

(Two investigators for Garrison were in the Free Press office this week and said that a careful viewing of the film confirmed their expectation that the film clearly showed separate hits on Kennedy and Texas Governor Connally as well as front and back hits on Kennedy himself. These observations are correct the major conclusion of the Warren Commission that Kennedy was assassinated by one man, Lee Harvey Oswald, firing from the Texas State Schoolbook Depository, would be invalidated.)

The letter from Senator McCarthy to Steve Burton is dated January 22, 1968, and is on stationery of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. It says:

Dear Mr. Burton

I have received your recent letter and appreciate your writing. It has been my view that an appropriate committee of Congress should make an inquiry of the questions which have been raised regarding the assassination of President Kennedy and

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determine whether or not a new investigation is needed. With best wishes. Sincerely yours, Eugene J. McCarthy. EJM/mgv. Another letter in the file, this one to Perry Owen, came from Senator Abraham Ribicoff on December 12, 1966:

"Thank you for your recent letter. I, too, believe that the American public has a right to know all the relevant facts surrounding the tragic assassination of President Kennedy. Efforts to provide those facts have my support. Sincerely, Abe Ribicoff.

Since Senator Ribicoff is now

one of Bobby Kennedy's staunchest supporters, it is possible that he would not write such an affirmative letter today.

A letter from Senator Russell B. Long of May 8, 1967, is also worth quoting at length.

Dear Mr. Owen:

This will acknowledge your letter regarding New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison's investigation of the Kennedy assassination, and my encouragement of that investigation. I very much appreciate your support in this regard.

I have always questioned the Warren Commission's conclusion that only one person was involved in the assassination of the late President. I made known my feelings to the District Attorney during a trip to New York last year, and I was pleased to see that he followed our conversation up with an apparently thorough investigation of the matter.

It is my feeling that if no conspiracy did exist, then certainly no harm could be done by such an inquiry. On the other hand, if the current investigation should reveal that there was a plot involving two or more persons, then all Americans will be grateful and relieved that such an investigation was undertaken. Wish best wishes, I am Sincerely, Russell Long.

A letter to Fred Newcomb from California Congressman Alphonzo Bell on January 25, 1968 mentions the House Concurrent Resolution 312 which seeks to establish a joint committee to investigate the Kennedy assassination:

Dear Mr. Newcomb:

... I can assure you that many members of Congress share your concern about the investigation into the death of President Kennedy and would raise similar questions to your own ... I will surely relay to my colleagues on the Committee your queries about the investigation and will keep your views in mind should this resolution reach the floor of the House for a vote. With every good wish, I am sincerely yours, Al (Alphonzo Bell, United States Congressman. AB:arb, Enclosure).

A letter of May 22, 1967 from New York Congressman Theodore Kupferman to Perry Owen also deals with House Res. 312 and says, "I would hope that you could gain support for it from your friends throughout the country."

A letter from Colorado Senator Peter H. Dominick dated April 17, 1967, says, however, that "I would be happy to see far more study on the assassination ... But it is also doubtful that any further investigation will be approved by the Democratic leadership, as it was the President and the Democratic leadership that established the Warren Commission and precluded any possible Congressional investigation."

Senator Spessard L. Holland of Florida also expressed this pessimism in a letter to Perry Owen of March 20, 1967. He said, "I appreciate both your concern and point of view ... However, I doubt seriously if the truth will ever be known in our time—probably never—in spite of all the investigations which are being currently

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conducted at many levels. The Kennedy family has quite effectively deterred investigative phases by impounding necessary records under seal prohibiting comprehensive analysis upon which any latter day conclusions might be reached."

California Congressman Charles Teague, in a letter dated April 18, 1967, said, "If the current proceedings in Louisiana develop reliable leads or information, the chances are good that the Kennedy investigation will be reopened."

Letters in the possession of the Free Press which did not commit their authors one way or the other were received from Wisconsin Congressman Laird, Texas Senator Ralph Yarborough, Senator Herman Talmadge of Georgia, New York Senator Javits, Vice President Hubert Humphrey, Senator Birch Bayh of Indiana, and Senator George Murphy of California. All of these indicated politely that they would continue their study of the question.

On the other hand, a series of letters were received from United States government officials taking a fairly definite stand against reopening of the investigation until, as Hawaiian Senator

Daniel Inouye expressed it, "... Until I see more evidence that he (Garrison) is on sound grounds, I frankly am not encouraged to go to his assistance."

Similar letters were sent by Oregon Senator Mark Hatfield, Michigan Congressman Ford, ("The Commission did have an opportunity to examine all possible evidence, and based on this evidence drew what seems to me the best possible conclusions."), Robert Kennedy Administrative Assistant Joseph Dolan, California Senator Kuchel, and Fred M. Vinson, Jr., Assistant Attorney General.

United States Senator Tower from Texas, on the other hand, said, "... I will, of course be most interested to see what will be the results of the New Orleans investigation now under way. Certainly, if additional facts are brought out which merit further investigation of the assassination, I will support such investigation."

And Illinois Senator Charles Percy wrote on August 3, 1967, "... I am impressed by the fact that Senators Robert Kennedy and Edward Kennedy have both expressed confidence in the findings of the Warren Commission. Nevertheless, I would not oppose continuing investigative work on this matter."