

October 4, 1996

Mr. Gerald Posner  
300 East 54th Street  
New York, New York 10022-5026

Dear Mr. Posner:

Thank you for your letter of September 30 responding to my letter to you. I hope and trust that your book tour for *Citizen Perot* was successful.

We very much appreciate your offer to make copies of your *Case Closed* research materials available to the National Archives should you, at some future date, deposit the materials at some other archive.

Your concern about privacy matters and other similar issues is certainly understandable. In our discussions with researcher David Lifton about the possibility of his depositing his research materials with the National Archives, he raised many of the same issues. These concerns have been raised by other persons who have, nevertheless, ultimately donated their papers. Recently, for example, James L. Rankin donated seventeen boxes of his father's Warren Commission papers, despite his concern that there are personal privacy issues involved. Fortunately, Mr. Lifton has now agreed to donate his early research (including recordings and transcripts) for the book *Best Evidence*. At the Review Board's September public hearing in Los Angeles he made a presentation to the Board wherein he described his materials and donated them to the National Archives.

In answer to your question regarding whether we have asked other researchers for their materials I can say, of course, that we certainly have asked David Lifton to provide papers. Two other researchers (Harold Weisberg and John Newman) have made their papers completely available to the Review Board, although we have not solicited a donation from them. Some researchers have donated to us recordings of interviews with medical and autopsy personnel. We also requested a donation from Priscilla McMillan, who graciously agreed to give to the Archives her materials on Lee Harvey Oswald and her background research from *Marina and Lee*. We are now pursuing discussions with William Manchester in the hope of ultimately obtaining copies of his files collected for *Death of a President*. We would be interested in your suggestions of others who might possess particularly valuable materials.

Let me be candid about why I am interested in your research materials being donated to the National

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Archives. The types of material that, in general, would be the most appropriate to obtain from private researchers is their interviews of important witnesses. Although interviews are the types of records that private persons might best be able to contribute, it is my belief that, unfortunately, eye witness testimony is extremely unreliable and interviews conducted long after the fact (particularly by biased interviewers) generally do not elicit reliable evidence. The single best exception to this general rule of unreliability (and this exception is not itself always justifiable) is eye-witness testimony of professionals who were afforded an adequate opportunity to make professional observations. In the JFK case, the obvious examples would be the recollections of the Dallas doctors and the Bethesda autopsy personnel. This is why I was particularly interested in obtaining the early research materials of Mr. Lifton (who was among the first to interview the doctors and who asked many questions long before the controversies became clear). I was very pleased when he, despite his concerns, generously offered this early material to the Archives. In your case, it appears that you may have been able to obtain better access and cooperation from persons than have many other researchers. This is why, as I mentioned in my letter to you, we are particularly interested in obtaining any original materials that you have regarding the medical evidence. (Records of your discussions with Mr. Nosenko, for example, would also be of high interest.)

Moreover, I was intrigued by the comments you made to the Committee on Government Operations that I referenced in my previous letter. Inasmuch as I have taken the sworn depositions of doctors Boswell and Humes, and have asked them about the location of the entrance wounds, I would be very interested in hearing any recordings of their saying, in words or in substance, "that they had been mistaken about the [original] placement of the wound . . . and that it is in fact correctly placed 4 inches higher . . . ." Hearings on The Effectiveness of Public Law 102-526, The President John F. Kennedy Assassination Records Collection Act of 1992, before the House of Representatives Legislation and National Security Subcommittee of the Committee on Government Operations, 103rd Congress, First Session, at 112 (1993) (*see* enclosure). We certainly would have no objection to your seeking the consent of the doctors to the release of your records and we would ourselves be happy to help by making the initial contact with them if that would be of assistance to you. Given the discussions that I have had with them, I would be very surprised if they would have any objection.

Although I do not usually offer such explanations to potential donors, I thought that your candid letter to me deserved such a reply.

Let me again urge you to consider making a donation to the National Archives. We would be pleased to work with you to satisfy your concerns regarding privacy and other such matters.

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Sincerely,

T. Jeremy Gunn  
General Counsel

Enclosure