

December 5, 1996

Mr. John Stewart
23 Pierrepont Road
Newton Lower Falls, Massachusetts 02162

Dear Mr. Stewart:

Professor Henry Graff has passed your letter of November 22, 1996, on to me. I am both surprised and distressed by the tone and substance of your message.

You assert that the Review Board's release of the Dave Powers film was an "outrageous act" somehow linked with the "Oliver Stones of the world" and the pursuit of "nutty conspiracy theories." Suggesting that our motives include self-aggrandizement and catering to the base interests of the public, you allege that we are somehow "running wild," are out of touch with what our "real goals" should be, and are perpetuating "the myths of the Kennedy assassination." Beyond being insulted by what are serious charges indeed, I am appalled that anyone (especially someone with your experience) could so misread and mischaracterize our actions and the mandate of the Review Board.

Congress established the Review Board to identify, seek out, and make available all records related to the assassination of President Kennedy. In the case of the Powers film, that is precisely what we did. Our actions resulted in the public having access to a film that had previously been thought lost (apparently the JFK Library could not locate the film for years) and that had been the subject of conjecture concerning its content for some time. Certainly Mr. Powers, the owner of the film, was not upset by the release (we consulted with him and acted consistent with his wishes). Rather than perpetuate a myth, the Review Board succeeded in clarifying an issue that was open to speculation and doubt.

Your cynical comments about the timing of the release prompt me to respond that the film should have and could have been released long ago had it been available. The Board understandably took advantage of the great public interest in the anniversary of the assassination to get our message out that there are still important records, films, and photographs that need to be released. At no time did anyone associated with the Board

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link the Powers film to any theory of the assassination. Indeed, in my own public comments, I emphasized that the film was a record of the remarkable attraction that President Kennedy held for the American people as witnessed by the crowds that enveloped his limousine in San Antonio and Dallas.

I agree wholeheartedly with you that public agencies should attempt to enhance the "understanding of people about historical events." Were you able to view the Board's mission and activity more objectively, you would agree with me that this worthy goal has guided us at every step of our important and complex undertaking.

Sincerely,

David G. Marwell, Ph.D.
Executive Director

cc: Dr. Henry Graff
Dr. Kermit Hall
Dr. William Joyce
Dr. Anna Nelson
Judge John Tunheim