

July 9, 1997

Letter to the Editor
The New York Times
229 West 43d Street
New York, N.Y. 10036-3959

To the Editor:

The claim in your editorial "The Amnesty Option" (July 6) that "there are no official investigations extant" of the Kennedy assassination is patently absurd. You ought to be aware that there is an independent federal agency -- its creation reported in your newspaper -- that is currently working to open all U.S. Government records relating to the Kennedy assassination. This agency -- the Assassination Records Review Board -- was established by Congress in 1992 pursuant to the President John F. Kennedy Assassination Records Collection Act and is armed with broad powers that have allowed it to open thousands of once-secret records.

Although not empowered to re-investigate the assassination of President Kennedy, the Board is charged with locating and releasing all United States Government records relating to the assassination and identifying and obtaining relevant records in private hands. While the Review Board takes no position on any theory of the assassination, or on the question of whether a new investigation into the assassination should be convened, we are dedicated to assuring that the most complete and accurate record is compiled.

It was in pursuit of this important goal that the Review Board secured the donation of the papers of J. Lee Rankin, General Counsel of the Warren Commission, from his family and announced their release last week. And it was in connection with this release that the edits of a draft of the Warren Commission Report by Commission member Gerald Ford made news and found mention in your call for "greater clarity" about the Kennedy assassination.

Your startling assertion that former President Ford had "disclosed" that he had "altered" the "Warren Commission *finding* (emphasis added)" concerning the location of one of President Kennedy's wounds is simply egregiously wrong. It does a disservice to the truth, to the public, and to President Ford.

While it may be that your proposal of amnesty could play a role in reaching the truth and restoring

faith in our government and its institutions, it can be no substitute for the task of the Review Board which is the full disclosure of all relevant records. Nor can it substitute for your task which is the careful, responsible, and accurate reporting of the facts.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Henry F. Graff
Board Member

Dr. Kermit L. Hall
Board Member

Dr. William L. Joyce
Board Member

Dr. Anna K. Nelson
Board Member

The Honorable John R. Tunheim
Chair