

January 28, 1997

Dear Mr. DiEugenio,

As a member of the junior staff of the Assassination Records Review Board, I must take issue with your comments in the January-February issue of Probe. You characterized the ARRB staff as being "unanimous in thinking that the official versions are false." This is an incorrect characterization, and should be retracted.

It is perhaps true that the staff, as the people who do the day-to-day work with the documents and agencies in question, may have a broader understanding of what is contained in the documents we have reviewed. However, it is an insult not only to the Board, but to us as well, that the Board does not understand everything that has been released. We take great pride in being able to prepare precise and succinct briefings for the Board which keep them informed of everything that we have seen and done. They are not uninformed; to suggest otherwise implies that we as a staff have not been doing our job, and that sentiment is not appreciated.

After the issue of Probe containing the contention that the staff is unanimous in disputing the official story, there was quite a bit of discussion among the junior staff about who might have talked. Frankly, Mr. DiEugenio, none of us ever remember talking to you or anyone associated with the research community. We are all aware that our positions, combined with the volatility of the issue involved, would make any statements we make highly charged and open to misinterpretation or misrepresentation. Accordingly, we have all adopted a policy of not discussing the case or our work.

Even in our private lives, if we are asked about our jobs, we will give a non-committal answer so as not to cause trouble. Better no comments at all than ill-advised ones.

Finally, sir, I remind you that the Board is still in the process of completing its work. None of us, as the responsible researchers we are, would be foolish enough to make up our minds about a case before we have seen all the information, or to assign motive or meaning to information we do not yet fully understand. In short, Mr. DiEugenio, we are not unanimous in disbelieving the official versions, because we cannot draw conclusions yet. We can have hunches or working hypotheses, but they are only that. Also, none of us would venture that one could find even two people on staff who are of the same mind as to what the information we have seen means. I might respectfully add, sir, that about the only thing that the staff **is** of unanimous mind about is that Oliver Stone, at the very least, took some serious liberties with the truth in the name of creative license. The depth of that liberty is a matter of discussion for us, but none of us dispute that at least some misrepresentation occurred.

We on the staff are much like the general public, Mr. DiEugenio, in that it is virtually impossible to

find shared opinions on the Kennedy assassination. By characterizing us as such, before our work has been completed,, you have helped to sabotage the very process you claim to support. What do you suppose will happen now if the Board's final results are inconclusive, with no one able to assign concrete meaning to the information revealed? What if we don't definitively say, "The Warren Commission was wrong?" Thanks to comments like yours, we are now doomed to hearing accusations for the rest of our lives that we know something we haven't let on; that we were part of a cover-up; basically, that we are at best dupes and at worst liars. None of us wants to be dealing with junk like that in the future, and we respectfully ask that you refrain from public characterizations that might contribute to such insinuations. Thank you for understanding.