

Notes on Lunch with Arlen Specter on January 4, 2012

Originally published at [Coalition on Political Assassinations](#), November 8, 2012.

Extended presentation published in *rat haus reality press*, February 25, 2013.

Editor's note: The following is distilled from observations shared by Martin Schotz and Vincent Salandria. It is useful to make explicit some of the implications in these Notes. An important element is what Mr. Specter did not say. First, his reaching out to Mr. Salandria to have lunch demonstrates that in Arlen Specter's mind, Vincent Salandria was a person worthy of his respect and consideration. Secondly, at no point did Mr. Specter attempt to defend the veracity of the Warren Report. Instead, he seeks out Mr. Salandria's thoughts regarding:

1. what was the reason for the assassination?
2. what Mark Lane believed regarding the assassination?
3. if the Warren Commission was a setup?

A point of clarification that Mr. Salandria shared through e-mail is that Professor Jacob Cohen explicitly warned him, stating, "You will have to be killed." Evidence of the intent to silence Mr. Salandria was the tampering with his car and another vehicle described in the following:

"On several occasions the lug nuts on one wheel of my car were loosened so as to have the automobile threatened with the loss of a wheel at high speeds. When Jim Garrison sent a staff car to Philadelphia to have me deliver a manuscript to his book *Heritage of Stone* to his publisher, the car shook on the highway. When we pulled over, we discovered that the lug nuts were loosened on a wheel of that car. The Garrison car was driving us from Philadelphia to New York. The incident occurred while we were on the New Jersey turnpike driving at a high speed."

Vincent Salandria expresses his opinion that his life was saved by the effectiveness of Mr. Specter's work and the ineffectiveness of his own. In this writer's view, Mr. Salandria's devotion to honoring and serving Life's needs was and is highly effective. His persistent tenacity caused him to speak and write as a witness to the truth of *why* President Kennedy was murdered by elements of the federal government that were determined not to allow JFK to pursue a rapprochement with the Soviet Union nor a normalizing of relations with Cuba; in other words, to lessen tensions that could have led to a cessation of the Cold War. He stands as a shining light representing what a single human being can do to promulgate "historical truth [as] the polestar which guides humankind when we grope for an accurate diagnosis of a crisis."

Martin Schotz dedicated *History Will Not Absolve Us*, "To our children, all our children, the children of the world, who someday will want to know." A primary voice in the effort to make it possible for the children of the world to know is Vincent Salandria. The combination of his common sense, humility, and practice of critical thinking inform his contribution to making an accurate diagnosis of this crisis.

This recounting of their meeting—which occurred because Mr. Specter reached out to Mr. Salandria—indicates an attempt by Mr. Specter to meet as equals with a former adversary for the purpose of coming to terms with a portion of his life about which he was ambivalent. The tone of the exchange conveys a meeting of equals who related to each other with honor and respect. From the observation that, "Specter was smiling broadly as we left," it can be deduced that for Arlen Specter this meeting provided some solace and resolution regarding his participation in as conflicted a so-called investigation as the Warren Commission was. Regarding this, I asked Mr. Salandria to clarify the implication of Mr. Specter recalling "that in our confrontation [in 1964] I had accused him of corruption":

"Arlen Specter wanted me to declare him 'incompetent' and not 'corrupt.' I feel that this was an essential aspect of his desire to share a lunch with me. Given his sharp intelligence, rich experience as a district attorney and ambition for political office, I could not in good conscience satisfy this need of his. Additionally, I could not oblige Specter because I recognize that incompetency is much employed to seek to cover up the U.S. state crime of killing President Kennedy and many other covert U.S. warfare state atrocities. I have never declared the covert actions of the U.S. intelligence agencies to be incompetent. They are almost invariably and unerringly competent in murdering, individually and massively, in defense of U.S. military dominance and empire."

Beyond this, Mr. Salandria related Arlen Specter's genuine interest in listening without rebuttal or interruption to his former opponent's understanding of *why* the assassination occurred:

On the issue of what Specter left unsaid, the following subjects went unexplored by him or me. Was there a conspiracy? Who were the shooters? Specter asked a question about the setup of Oswald by the Warren Commission. This opening allowed me to go directly to the explanation of the

motivation for the assassination. He was willing to bypass 49 years of unfruitful and phony debate on whether there was a conspiracy and who were the shooters in the bushes. Instead, Specter discussed the Commission's setup which led to my discussion of the motivation for the killing. He was willing to hear me out without a word of rebuttal. He listened carefully to the motivation for the assassination that [James Douglass](#) in *JFK and the Unspeakable* has resolved through solid and convincing proof i.e. that JFK was killed by U.S. intelligence to perpetuate the Cold War.

Through his actions regarding this meeting, Arlen Specter expresses the same human capacity to change and grow as was indicated in [the question President Kennedy posed to the Quakers who visited him](#) in the Oval Office on May 1, 1962: "You believe in redemption don't you?"

Notes on Lunch with Arlen Specter on January 4, 2012

On January 4, 2012 at 11:25 a.m. I arrived at the Oyster House restaurant in Philadelphia for a meeting with former U.S. Senator Arlen Specter. He had called me a week or so earlier and suggested we have lunch.

We met, shook hands, and seated ourselves at a table. I thanked him for suggesting having lunch with me.

I told him that I viewed his work on the Kennedy assassination as very likely having saved my life. I also wanted him to know that if I had been given his Warren Commission assignment, and if I knew then what I know now about power and politics in our society, I would have done what he did. Of course, as a pacifist peace activist with socialist leanings, such as I was and am, I would never have been selected for Specter's job with the Warren Commission. Arlen Specter was neither a pacifist nor a peace activist. He was a lawyer. I believe that Specter did not know that after the assassination of President Kennedy he was no longer a citizen of a republic but rather was a subject of the globally most powerful banana republic.

But if I had been chosen for his assignment, i.e. [to frame Lee Harvey Oswald as Kennedy's killer](#), I would have done what Specter did. As a lawyer I would have had been obligated to serve the best interests of my client, the U.S. government. My assignment would have been to cover up the state crime, the coup. I said that not to do that work and not to steer the society away from the ostensible plot to kill President Kennedy, which plot had as its central theme a pro-Castro and pro-Soviet origin, would have resulted in terrible political consequences.

I told Specter that the American people could never have accepted my view of the assassination as a covert military-intelligence activity supported by the U.S. establishment not then, and not now. They would have readily accepted as truth the leftist-plot script that the assassins employed. Even now, most Kennedy assassination critics will not accept my view of a U.S. national security state military-industrial killing. I explained that my very bright and rational wife could and would not completely accept my version of the meaning of the Kennedy assassination.

The U.S. national security state's killing of Kennedy was cloaked in the Oswald myth. That myth included a supposed U.S. defector to the Soviet Union who headed up a Fair Play for Cuba Committee, and who before the assassination allegedly sought a Cuban passport. Therefore, the myth pointed an accusing finger at Fidel Castro and the Soviets.

If the U.S. public had been convinced that Castro and the Soviets were behind the killing of Kennedy, then the military would have considered the killing an act of war, and a military dictatorship in the U.S. would have probably resulted.

[Oswald, a U.S. intelligence agent](#) whose past had been molded by the C.I.A., could have been cast into whatever his intelligence masters chose. If the Oswald myth had completely unraveled and had exposed the joint chiefs to the U.S. public as the criminals behind the coup, they, the joint chiefs, would never have quietly surrendered their newly acquired power. I believe that instead, they would have sought to preserve and exploit their newly acquired status of possessing ultimate power over the U.S. arms budget and foreign policy. I believe that they would have proclaimed a national security emergency and imposed martial law. They would have declared a state of emergency, to a state of war, and would have designated the replacement for President Kennedy as a unitary president. We now have been made to understand that the unitary president is unhampered by constitutional separation of powers and the restraints of the bill of rights. In short, the unitary president is a euphemism for the correct political designation of a dictator.

Specter asked me what I thought was the reason for the assassination. In reply I asked whether he had read [the correspondence between President Kennedy and Nikita Khrushchev](#). He had not. I explained that my reading of the correspondence convinced me that Kennedy and Khrushchev had grown very fond of one another. I saw them as seeking to end the Cold War in the area of military confrontation. They were in my judgment seeking to change the Cold War into a peaceful competition on an economic rather than military basis, testing the relative merits of a free market and command economy. I saw the U.S. military intelligence and its civilian allies as being opposed to ending the Cold War.

I told him that I concluded that there was also a conflict between Kennedy and our military on the issue of escalation in Vietnam. In order to deter the efforts of Kennedy and Khrushchev to accomplish a winding down of the Cold War, the C.I.A., with the approval of the U.S. military, killed Kennedy.

I said that I believed the assassination was committed at the behest of the highest levels of U.S. power. I said that I did not use sophisticated thinking to arrive at my very early conclusion of a U.S. national-security state assassination. I told him that I think like the Italian peasant stock

from which I came. We use intuition.

I explained that the day after the Kennedy assassination I met with my then brother-in-law, Harold Feldman. We decided that if Oswald was the killer, and if the U.S. government were innocent of any complicity in the assassination, Oswald would live through the weekend. But if he was killed, then we would know that the assassination was a consequence of a high level U.S. government plot.

Harold Feldman and I also concluded that if Oswald was killed by a Jew, it would indicate a high level WASP plot. We further decided that the killing of Oswald would signal that no government investigation could overturn the truth. In that event we as private citizens would have to investigate the assassination to arrive at the historical truth.

Specter uniformly maintained a courteous, serious and respectful demeanor, as did I. He asked me whether I had talked to Mark Lane frequently. I told him that I had spoken to him, and that I had spoken to essentially every assassination critic then active. I described meeting Mark Lane at a dinner in Philadelphia at a lawyer's home. The dinner was in 1964. I could not recall the name of the lawyer host. I related that Spencer Coxe, the Executive leader of the Philadelphia branch of the American Civil Liberties Union, was also present.

At that dinner I informed Lane that I was interested in Oswald as a likely U.S. intelligence agent provocateur. Lane was not interested in the concept of Oswald as a possible U.S. intelligence asset. Specter asked me what Lane believed regarding the assassination. I said that at that time he believed there was a plot, but he did not name who the plotters were and did not discuss what he thought the reason was for the killing. I did say that later, Lane got a jury to decide for Lane's client who had said that E. Howard Hunt was in Dallas on the date of the Kennedy assassination. Lane's client had been sued for libel. He described the case in his 1991 book *Plausible Denial*.

In 1964, after his work with the Warren Commission was completed, Specter had been honored for this association at a meeting of the Philadelphia Bar Association. He asked me what I remembered about that event. I told him that I attended with my copy of the [Warren Report](#) and directed some questions at him regarding the shots, trajectories and wounds in the Kennedy assassination. After the meeting some of my colleagues at the bar asked me to write an article. That night I did so. I sent the article to Theodore Vorhees, the Chancellor of the Philadelphia Bar Association, and asked him to have it published. He [sent it back](#) and asked me to tone it down. I did so. He [got it published in *The Legal Intelligencer*](#).

Specter recalled that in our confrontation I had accused him of corruption. He said that he had asked me at that time whether I would change the charge to incompetency. I had refused. I told

him that I could not change it to incompetency because I knew then from his public record, as I know now, that he was not incompetent. My charge was reiterated in [The Legal Intelligencer article](#), which described the Warren Commission's work as speculation conforming to none of the evidence. I said the Warren Report did not have the slightest credibility, committing errors of logic and being contrary to the laws of physics and geometry.

Specter, during our 2012 lunch, asked me whether I thought that the Warren Commission was a set up. I answered that probably not all of the Commissioners knew it was a set up, but that Dulles and Warren knew. I also told him that I thought that [McGeorge Bundy was privy to the plot](#). Specter did not respond to this.

I explained that I did not discuss with friends my view of the assassination and my conception of how controlled our society is. I said that I did not discuss with my friends matters such as we were discussing because people are just not ready to accept my view of the assassination and the tight control over our society. I said that I had nothing to offer to people in terms of solutions to the mess we are in. I related how last year, when I had a blood condition and thought I was going to die, my big regret was the mess of a society we were bequeathing to our children.

Specter commented: "Washington is in chaos." I told him that I was deeply concerned about whether we are going to bomb Iran. Specter said, "We are not going to bomb Iran."

I offered an example of how out of control the society is. I pointed out that he had been against escalation in Afghanistan. While Obama was supposed to be meditating over whether or not to escalate the U.S. forces there, Generals McChrystal and Petraeus were speaking to the press telling the world that we were going to escalate. These statements by the generals were made while Vice President Biden was speaking publicly against escalation. I said that I thought McChrystal and Petraeus should have been court-martialed for violating the chain of command. I then said that I don't think Obama any longer has power over the military, despite the ostensible constitutional chain of command.

I told Specter that I knew there was a conspiracy to kill Kennedy notwithstanding his single-bullet theory because [the holes in the custom-made shirt and suit jacket of Kennedy](#) could not have ridden up in such a fashion to explain how a shot from the southeast corner of the sixth floor of the Texas Book Depository Building, hitting Kennedy at a downward angle of roughly 17 degrees, and hitting no bone, could have exited from his necktie knot. I told him that Commission Exhibit 399 was a plant.

I admitted that I had coached Gaeton Fonzi before [his interview with him](#) on the questions that he should ask Specter. Specter asked me where Fonzi is. I told him that he lives in Florida, and

that he is sick with Hodgkin's disease. Specter said he was a good reporter. I told Specter that Fonzi was a great investigative reporter.

I told Specter that my very smart wife does not accept my political thinking regarding the nature of the power in control of the country and the world. Specter asked me about my wife. I told him that she is Jewish. She is a graduate of Swarthmore College. She studied at the University of Chicago and accomplished all but the dissertation in Russian Literature there. She owns and manages 41 apartments around Rittenhouse Square. Her father was a fellow traveler. He was subpoenaed before the House Un-American Activities Committee. He retained Abe Fortas as his lawyer. The hearing was cancelled. He was a philanthropist who financed the Youth Ruth Wing of the Jerusalem Museum and a college and high school in Israel.

I suggested to Specter that he was selected to perform the hardest assignment of the Warren Commission because he was a Jew. The government could have selected a right WASP lawyer for the job. I said that I had received less criticism for my work on the assassination than he had received for his work on the Commission and as Senator. He related how in Bucks County in a speaking engagement a man had risen and shouted at him that he should resign because he was too Jewish. I told him that I thought that he was a good Senator. He replied that being a Senator was a good and interesting job.

So how is it that Arlen Specter's work on the Warren Commission saved my life? If I had been successful in arousing public opposition to the National Security State, whom I viewed at the President's true killers, then the National Security State, possessing supreme power after its successful coup, would have liquidated any effective dissent. In 1966, after a public forum on the Warren Commission's evidence, I was advised by Brandeis Professor Jacob Cohen that I would have to be killed. I viewed Professor Cohen as speaking for the assassins.

The Warren Report quieted the public. And as it developed, I was completely ineffective. There was no need to dispose of me. So, I consider my life was saved by the effectiveness of Arlen Specter's work and the ineffectiveness of my own.

As we were leaving the Oyster House I gave Specter a copy of [James W. Douglass's](#) book, *JFK and the Unspeakable*. I said it was the best book on the assassination, and that it was dedicated to a friend of mine and me.

Specter was smiling broadly as we left. I told him that he had a great smile, but that he did not sport it often in public. I asked him whether he was in good health. He said he was, and seemed optimistic about his well-being. I don't know whether he was then aware of his illness. In dealing with his protracted struggle against very serious afflictions he displayed remarkable

fight and courage.

Knowing what I know now, and being then, as now, committed to historical truth, I would have not changed my earliest statement that the Kennedy assassination was a crime of the U.S. warfare state. But I would not have endeavored to rally people to confront as I did the assassins. I know now that the U.S. public never did want to accept the U.S. warfare state as the criminal institutional structure that it is. I know now, that even if the U.S. public ever was ready to accept the true historical meaning of the Kennedy assassination, that there are and have been no institutional structures open to them with which they could hope to countervail successfully the Kennedy killers, the enormous power of the U.S. empire and its warfare state.

I know that my efforts to convince people to oppose Kennedy's assassins were feckless. But was the effort of a small community of people to establish the historical truth of the Kennedy assassination valueless? I think not. I feel that historical truth is the polestar which guides humankind when we grope for an accurate diagnosis of a crisis. Without historical truth, an accurate diagnosis of the nature and cause of crisis, we would have no direction on how to move to solve societal disease.

Knowing what I know now, would I change my harsh criticisms of Arlen Specter? Yes, I would. Specter was a superior lawyer who enlisted his services to the U.S. government. The Warren Commission Report, through its lies, served to calm the U.S. public in a period of great crisis. If any serious domestic or foreign effort had been made to counter the coup, the weaponry commanded by the state criminals would have resulted in catastrophic loss of life. Therefore, in my judgment of Arlen Specter I defer to the wisdom of Sophocles, who said: "Truly, to tell lies is not honorable; but where truth entails tremendous ruin, to speak dishonorably is pardonable."