

Dear Dick and David,

5/16/91

Thinking about yesterday's conversation while walking this morning it occurred to me that I may not have been as clear as I could have been responding to the practicability of writing a book on the FBI's disclosed JFK assassination records. Or about the Agent Oswald project I suggested instead.

It is true, as I said, that writing about the enormous volume is not practical and requires a great amount of time to be in a position to write informatively and with both understanding and fairness. What I think I did not make clear is that selecting special subjects included in them is not impossible. This is part of what I had in mind in referring to what I call the file of copies my "subject" file. *Supplemented by Dallas index*

Writing productively and meaningfully about them, for one not steeped in the facts and actualities of the JFK assassination, requires selecting subjects that do not ~~that~~ ~~do not~~ necessitate all-encompassing knowledge to begin with. Of these subjects one that requires no real knowledge of the assassination at all and yet is quite worthwhile is Agent Oswald. This also has the advantage of being a subject on which I ~~saw~~ ^{conceived} a book 25 years ago and thus was alert to any information on it and established files with this title and others that relate to it.

That long ago a friend then a Bantam editor like ^d the idea and found others there who also liked it but Mark Jaffe nixed it.

It can be quite exciting, as the book should be, and I believe there would be a real market for the book. There is a real case that Oswald served some agency in the official records and while it is anything but conclusive the many official dishonesties about it and some of the incredible things considered by the CIA have no other reasonable, rational explanation. This part involves a largely untold but partly confessed story of the defected KGB official Yuri Nosenko. The CIA has divulged practically nothing ^{by the CIA} except for the confession it made via John Lemon ¹ part to the House assassins committee. (I taped his testimony and believe it was edited before publication to subdue the horrors they actually put on paper about what to do about Nosenko.) When he first tried to defect in Geneva the CIA there invented a series of spurious, mostly impossible reasons to reject him. But he did succeed in defecting and when in Washington the CIA treated him like a prince. ⁴ Until he was interviewed by the FBI and the FBI gave the CIA copies of what he had told it. It then treated him so inhumanly it is hard to imagine- and for three years.

What he told the FBI is ~~that~~ the KGB regarded Oswald as a "sleeper agent" or an "agent in place" and thus ordered that he leave the USSR. It also knew that even in the USSR he was openly anti-USSR. If David reads the last few pages of Post Mortem he'll get a whiff. In them, having those few pages blank, I wrote a little about those FBI reports.

There is a little that is relevant in Oswald in New Orleans, including that his favorite book was the anti-Communist classic, Orwell's Animal Farm.

I'd ⁴begin work on Oswald in New Orleans before Garrison and indicated what I had in

in Whitewash when I said that Oswald's career in New Orleans is consistent only with what in intelligence is called establishing a cover.

As a boy Oswald's favorite TV shows was "I Lived Three Lives," based on the book of a former FBI informer, Herbert Philbrick. Oswald never missed even the reruns. When he was 16 he wrote both the Communist Party and the Socialist Party (maybe instead of the Socialists the Socialist Workers Party) that he was dedicated to it and wanted to help it in any way he could. He could not have been equally dedicated to those who detested and fought each other. What I am saying is that his desire for such a career goes back that far in his short life.

When he "defected" the Navy checked his records and in a cable to the Embassy I have said the records showed no security clearance but he could have been cleared for "confidential," the lowest clearance.

When he was charged with killing JFK the FBI ~~from~~ checked the Navy records and found no security clearance in them.

All the supposed Navy records were published by the Commission, including, supposedly, all his active-duty assignments. He had not a single active-duty assignment that was not connected with the CIA and there is no such indication in the disclosed records. Each but one such assignment is merely "maneuvers," *etc.*

But as I reported in Oswald in New Orleans, he actually had Top Secret and Crypto clearances.

The man who allegedly killed the President had all these things and more in his records and all were avoided, suppressed or lied about in all the official investigations? In itself sensational.

The third crisis the Commission faced, after the FBI's leaking to boxing it in and its recognition that the FBI was determined to control it was the report that Oswald had worked for the FBI. I have its executive session transcripts and published them. What the Commission limited itself to is what it knew was phony, that he was known to the FBI as S379. It knew this was a lie and I have one of the memos recording the truth, that the number is inconsistent with any FBI numbers and is consistent with the CIA's numbering system. It was 100669 as I now recall. I booby-trapped the Commission's source of the ~~S379~~ S379 number and got his confirmation of the six-digit number. He later became a friend and gave me an account of why he invented the phony number. As of my last effort, several years ago, he was still shying away from the real number. I'll make another effort now. He is a conservative reporter and I've been supposed to call him since I got his last Xmas card.

The untold Nosenko story is in itself quite a story and it is part of the agent Oswald story.

Of the Oswald who got to Helsinki from London before that was possible by any commercial transportation. Of the Oswald never prosecuted for criminal acts, like getting a fraudulent

discharge from the Marines. The Oswald who told the embassy he was going to give the USSR all the secrets he had. With his Top Secret and Crypto clearances. (Had to do with special radar and codes.) The Oswald whose State Department records were never flagged, as they were required to have been, to prevent his getting a passport, and when he was in New Orleans he got one overnight when others did not.

How else explain how cool and unworried Oswald was with his family after he was charged with killing JFK, other than he expected nothing would happen to him, one interpretation being that someone would speak for him and get him off.

Yet with this and much more available nobody has ever done anything with it. Not even with the hints in my writing, beginningⁿ at several points in Whitewash, finished mid-February 1965. Or after what I published in Post Mortem in 1975. Or with any of the records disclosed to me that are available to others that I've not used, quite a few provocative pages. Not even after "elms confessed before the House assassins^{Committee} that the CIA had had files on Oswald and most could not be located.

This is off the top of the ~~end~~ head when I got home. Just what comes readily to mind.

I hope it is enough to suggest that there is a potentially exciting, worthwhile and successful book that we can talk about a greater length soon.

Again thanks and best to you all,

Harold

Page 1, Nosenko: makes a coming book by a British reporter, Mangold, worth getting.