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Dear Harold,

firstly, thanks for your long and interesting letter of 7th August. Once again I feel rather humbled by the time and thought you have given to me. I appreciate it greatly.

Next, I am afraid I bring bad news from Jenny Wheeler, the editor of the "Sunday Star". She listened to the outline I passed on to her using the story in your letter (the current situation on the release of further undisclosed documents to do with the JFK assassination and Stone's role in this). But that was all she did, just listened, and said that she could not see NZ readers picking up on a story they would not be able to relate to. She said again that any story that related in whole or part to Oliver Stone was not going to sell well in NZ purely because the movie "JFK" was a big flop here.

What she really wanted was something that connected the JFK assassination to the 1992 US presidential election, whether the matter of further disclosure of official records of the assassination was an issue between Clinton and Bush. I told her you had not known of any developments in this area, and that George Bush as a former director of the CIA was unlikely to ever do anything to facilitate the release of more documents, and that Clinton saw no advantage to himself in making the JFK assassination an issue. Am I right in this?

I have just had two weeks vacation, though only a few days of that time were spent in any pursuit of relaxation, with a young family one is never fully 'on holiday'. I went back to school to work for some days and I have been working on the page proofs of my next book. Having an English publisher makes this a hectic period, proofs are always needed back urgently, travelling by courier, and correspondence is by FAX messages and late night phone calls (late night here in NZ is morning and daylight working time in England). My books are about military history, specifically the role of German forces in the North African campaigns of WWII. That is my area of special knowledge and interest, something I developed as a young teenager when I was collecting war souvenirs as a hobby. Though I must say I no longer find study of WWII as relevant as I did years ago.

Last week our family went to a small seaside town for three days and I took along the latest of the books I have acquired on the JFK assassination, "SPY SAGA -Lee Harvey Oswald and U.S. Intelligence" by Phillip H. Melanson, published 1990 by Praeger, New York. It did not tell me a lot of new things, though it tied together most of what I already knew. I am assuming you know this book, your work was quoted a few times,

especially your 'Oswald in New Orleans'. Melanson takes the position that George de Mohrenschildt was some sort of mentor to Oswald and was likely his CIA controller or some such in Dallas. From what you have said previously, this was not likely. Have you read this book by Melanson? One thing he mentioned that I was not aware of was to do with photos taken of the TSBD building by two bystanders, Dillard and Powell. One was taken at some unspecified time before the other, and it is evident from differences between the two photos that in the interval somebody had stacked extra cartons of books in that window, after the shots had been fired at the President.

Melanson also mentions that the ammunition (cartridge cases) recovered from the TSBD were part of a lot ordered from the manufacturer by the USMC, but that the USMC was likely a cover for a CIA covert order. This reminded me, a friend who reads Italian said he read years ago in an Italian magazine that the ammunition used by Oswald (sic) was part of a batch ordered by the CIA in the 1950's for use in a planned uprising in Albania where there were still many Italian military rifles left over from the Italian occupation before and during the war. Unfortunately he offered no indication of a source for this information so I could not check it up.

I always have questions for you, do I not? And this letter is no different in that regard. The apparent incompetence (or whatever word is appropriate) of the Secret Service in making their arrangements to protect the President in Dallas is something I do not understand. Did the Warren Commission ever look into this? And what of the decision (by somebody in the Secret Service escort detail presumably) not to use the 112th Military Intelligence Group based in San Antonio when it was offered? I picked this up from something L. Fletcher Prouty said, and he was quoting the then commander of this group. Prouty also pointed to the many open windows in high buildings along the route taken by Kennedy through Dallas and said it was practice to prevent such things which were potentially dangerous in themselves. And whose decision was it to route the presidential party onto Elm Street, rather than have it travel straight down Main Street and onto the Freeway that way? Is this significant at all?

How have you managed to keep going for so long? I feel a sort of weariness growing in me as I keep reading and pondering the meaning of everything I have discovered this year in reading about the assassination. It all goes to building a cynicism and a feeling of hopelessness about the future. The more I read the more the implications of the assassination and of the coverup sink in. Yet when I started to read my way through the books on your reading list I thought I would probably end up with a pretty good idea of who was behind the assassination. That no longer seems so important. I can probably make a few shrewd guesses about who was involved, but I cannot be sure.

It seems to me that in the most powerful country in the world, the USA, the most powerful people have not been the visible people in government. People with the real if unseen power have been controlling US policy on a lot of things since the end of WWII. I think it likely a sort of mirror group in the USSR were controlling Soviet government policies too in the same areas. These people are the ones who Eisenhower referred to as 'the military-industrial complex'. He knew what he was talking about. I do not think that these people, in both super powers, ever saw beyond the cold war, or even thought beyond it. However in the same way that a nuclear war would have engulfed and destroyed both countries, the end of the cold war is starting to have a similar effect. Like it or not, the world you and I have been a part of for the last forty-five years has been a world controlled by, and directed by, the people who assassinated Kennedy (even if they didn't order it, they certainly created conditions for it and the institutions that were primarily responsible for the assassination). Now this control is beginning to slip from the hands of these unseen people- the cold war is over and with it justification for so much illegal brutality and force (in the name of truth and freedom one supposes), the armaments industries are closing their production lines, the troops for so long overseas are now coming home, and their rhetoric and posturing through the years of the cold war will not seem so convincing, even to hardened patriots because the floodgates of change are open and their jobs may be on the line. I believe what is happening in the world today is no longer tightly controlled by people who have been pulling strings since the 1940's. That is how it seemed to me, lying awake on a strange bed in a seaside cottage, already thinking of writing what I have just said in a letter to you. My thoughts that night in bed were far more eloquent and convincing than what I have just written here by the way.

I hope that you have by now worked out a satisfactory way of getting more sleep at night. It sounds like a hard thing to do, get by on only a couple of hours sleep a night. What are the "Baltimore Orioles games" you mention as watching at night with your wife? It must be some sport or other, and I guess the "Orioles" are a team and it must be a game played at night under lights. Am I right? Sorry if I sound a little down in this letter, a good friend is dying of cancer, slowly at first but quickly now, and tonight my wife and I said good-bye to a close friend who flew back to the States to continue her PhD at Harvard (the PhD is in some new field called 'Public Policy'). It was sad saying good-bye to her, Boston is such a long way from Auckland. She is a good and decent person and she has a bitterly sharp sense of humour. She is also an old friend of our other friend who is dying of cancer. The four of us were together before we drove our friend going back to Boston out to the airport. We four will never all be together again, and Jan (our friend returning to Boston) told us tonight that after her PhD she may well stay on in the US.

With warm best wishes,  
yours,  
Jan