

DAL McGUIRK
93 PAH ROAD EPSOM
AUCKLAND 1003 NZ
PH 0-9-625 4844

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dear Harold,

I see with some shame that your last letter was written on the 19th September, and today is Monday the 26th October! Today is a public holiday in NZ, Labour Day, and I am making a massive attack on the bundle of letters I have piled up here by my desk to reply to.

NZ always celebrates Labour Day on the last Monday in October, to mark the event in 1894 when NZ became the first country in the world to legislate the 8hr day for labour and to protect basic working conditions and rates of pay in law.

I heard a couple of news items a few weeks ago on the radio which said something about an imminent release of the papers that Congress is working to lifting the access embargo on. I waited for something on this to appear in our daily press but there has been nothing so far. It is often like this in NZ, what a radio news editor thinks is newsworthy is ignored by a newspaper news editor.

I have run out of steam at the moment as far as my reading on the JFK assassination goes. There have been no new books to collect at the library for a while, and I have not yet ordered a copy of the reprint of the Warren Commission Report you mentioned was available now, nor a copy of Sylvia Meagher's book. I must get my own copies of both of these books.

I was thinking I should read your books again, but I am going to put that commitment off until the end of the year and the start of the summer vacation. I am too busy right now marking my students' work and writing end of year assessments, it is an enormous drain of energy and time.

There was a small item in yesterday's Sunday paper, something about Marina Oswald (Porter?) speaking at some conference in Dallas on the assassination. Let me find it. Yes, got it here, it was billed a 'symposium' and the keynote speaker was a Mary Ferrell. Where have I heard that name? Do you know her? The same news story reported that Jim Garrison died last week.

My new book was released in England last week, and I heard from my publisher just two days ago that they have sold a North American edition, to some publisher in Wisconsin, Motorbooks International. I have never heard of them. It seems the US Military Bookclub is also interested in buying an edition. If both of these co-editions come off I may be up in the States sometime late next year. It would give me enormous pleasure to be able to meet you, and I hope I am able to get myself to Maryland in the time I have. I will plan it so that I do get to meet you, should I make a trip to the US.

Dal McGuirk

Looking again at the news item with its picture of Marina Oswald/Porter, I cannot help but wonder what she must know about things that followed the death of Kennedy and of Oswald. Surely she was coached for her testimony before the Warren Commission, maybe not blatantly, but in subtle ways?

Yes, you are right, the production of most military hardware continues, but for all that there are apparently job losses in some areas of the defence industry. I watched edited versions of the three Presidential debates on TV, but everything is too tightly managed and predictable in a way for somebody like me so far away from the United States to learn much.

I have not asked you before, and I will understand if you choose to ignore the question, but if you had to make a guess, who do you think was in the best position and had the best motive to organise the assassination? I know you do not like guessing games. If you were to ask me the same question, I would have to say on probability it was one semi-autonomous section of the CIA, some part of the CIA deeply involved in the Cuban politics of the time, some part of the CIA with access to large amounts of cash, some part of the CIA with experience of successfully carrying out assassinations, some part of the CIA that had good contacts within the USA to Police networks and indeed they would have had to have links (maybe more on a personal level rather than official and formal) with higher law enforcement agencies at the Federal level, and they would have had to have been people who were used to exercising real power within whatever sphere of existence they lived and worked in, and, they would be secretive people, very private people, very invisible in their world of real power.

It is not too difficult to sense the extent of involvement by various government agencies in the cover up, but so far I have read nothing that convinces me of the active participation in the assassination by any of these various government bodies apparently involved in the cover up. What do YOU think? I would like to know what you have to say in answer to this most hypothetical of leading questions.

I apologise for this letter, it reads flat and dull to me as I look over it. I can only plead that I am very tired, tired from work and tired after a spell of sickness. It was just a virus, but it made me weak and tired for a good two weeks. My daughter and son caught it also. And I am not over it yet.

I hope you are as well as can be expected, and that you and your wife are happy and safe. (Do you have any children?)

I look forward to hearing from you again. In the meantime I send you warm wishes and greetings from New Zealand.

yours,
Dan