

Thursday night 26.8.65

Dear Maggie,

It is no joke, working on this until one breathe's one's last sooner than one thinks. I am sitting here, nauseated and sick, fearful of a real collapse, because I have been grinding out the index so mercilessly--and trying to give adequate attention also to a whole galaxy of WR-related matters that crop up almost daily. My friend Mari moved back to Dallas, thanks to which I received the article about the rifle and revolver. The story was NOT covered here wither. I think I wrote you that I sent a copy to Salandria and that he wanted to do a story; unfortunately he did not reach Lobenthal. Isabel had to call Lobenthal about something that came up on her suit and told him that S was trying to reach him. To my surprise L was indifferent and said that he would not call S--it is nothing more than a huge dose of overwork, I suspect, as L has been concentrating on the selections for dramatic reading.

But the current LIFE (for 27.8.65) has a long article on the rifle; I assume someone has called it to your attention and that you have read it, with the same exasperation at times that I felt (rage is closer). This kind of development is one of the things that has made me, for the first time in memory, neglect my work at the office, using my time there to work on the case and risking real trouble--neglecting important matters which, if there are aftermaths, will find me without any excuse. I couldn't let the LIFE article go by without a word but felt too busy to take time to write to the author--so this afternoon I phoned LIFE to ask where I could reach him by phone, and the switchboard immediately connected me with him. I had quite an interesting talk with him, calling his attention to the contradictions and misrepresentations of information on the rifle and the rifle ammunition (I won't repeat the specifics, which are just as familiar to you as to anyone). He was interested and I thought honest on the whole; his research in the HEE was limited to consulting the sources indicated in the footnotes--which of course is a trap and the very reason I am ruining my health and shortening my life by preparing the subject index.

Wheeler (the author of the LIFE article) asked how I had achieved such extensive knowledge of the case and the HEE; when I said that I was doing a subject index he howled or shrieked "What a ghastly job" but was interested and helpful, recommending his literary agent to me when it emerged that I was a novice. It may turn out to be a useful contact (Wheeler, I mean, rather than the agent).\*

I have been meaning to remind you again to send me the charges for the photographic materials; also, to apologize for not yet having returned the tapes. I wanted very much to hear them; but the pressure of events and travels since I received them, and the fact that I had no tape recorder, immobilized me. Then Bill Crehan, whose wife has some kind of recording business, offered to play and retape them--he took several days off from his job (it is a wonder any of us remain employed), playing sick, rented a tape-recorder, and went through infinite trouble--only to find that for the last few tries, it has not been possible for us to arrange a conjunction of the bodies and the machine at the same time. It is now scheduled for tomorrow night--auditing the Lane/Ball and the Lane/Belli tapes--after which I can mail them back to you or, if it is all right, hold them until your visit to New York. Please let me know which you prefer.

I agree with you about S's impressions of the Zapruders---it seems to me that he places Gov C's wound much much too late. But I am suspending judgment, as you are, until I have the benefit of his complete notes and his reasoning.

\*Perhaps in due time if the contact continues and develops I might approach him with a request to arrange a viewing of the original Zapruder film, projected as a motion picture and in slow motion. But that is entirely premature now.



I won't comment at any great length on Marina. As you know, I mistrust and dislike her (although at times I feel a momentary sympathy or rapport) and feel certain that she has falsely and coldbloodedly collaborated in the posthumous frameup (if not at an earlier stage). I suspect that we have not seen the last headlines where she and her marriage(s) are concerned. (Maybe Porter wants to go down into history too?)

I don't remember whether or not I wrote you about the emergence, at long last, of the May issue of the NYU Law Review with the symposium on the Warren Report. It finally came out about the 15th of August! Do get a copy, if you have not already --if you can't get it locally, write NYU Law Review, Washington Square, NYC, attention Miss Joyce Doll. There are five articles (one is irrelevant to the case), and I wrote to three of the authors. One has already answered, quite cordially; it seems my letter was his first clue to the publication of his article! That has much to say for the management of the NYU Law Review, as does the date of circulation of the May issue! He was chagrined to learn that Rankin had misled him by saying that the WC had never used its power of subpoena (I had pointed out in my letter that Hamblen, Surrey, Oliver, Andrews Weissman and at least one more witness had been served with subpoenas) but said "in defense of Rankin" that this is the kind of job one wants to forget as quickly as possible once it is over. However, he was annoyed that his article should have included such an error, albeit Rankin's, and said that he wished he had known of my work and had consulted me when preparing his review. (Very flattering.) His name is Cushman; an article by Freese of Los Angeles is also useful, in that it demonstrates the bias of the Commission, although in an apologetic and timid spirit. Of course, no public comment anywhere (so far as I know) <sup>on</sup> the publication of this not-insignificant symposium!

About the lay-off message: Maggie, as I said on the phone, I am inclined to put it aside, as there is no way to determine the accuracy or actuality of K's comment. I do not know who the intermediary was or whether he exaggerated or even invented the whole thing. Of course, if it is both true and precise, it is staggering and enormous in implication. I am glad that you are treating it with discretion, especially where Dave is concerned, because now that you have explained the mystery of the "new dimension" I am almost speechless and, frankly, I am frightened. If concentrating on the case can intoxicate and unseat one's reason, even momentarily, my prospects personally can't be very good. (Actually I find myself turning into a ruthless, rude, obsessed machine--some kind of steamroller that knows only that the index must get finished, even if blood flows.) What can I say about his ladder, trees, plus-or-minus helicopter???? One or even two men behind the wall--yes, it is possible and it seems to me to be recorded on the photograph. But could 150-odd witnesses fail to notice an army truck, equipped with crane-ladder, and a regiment of helmeted men???? Could the witness in the RR tower overlook such a concentration, or those looking out of windows? Or were they all supposed to be "in" on it??? Dear heaven, only let Dave keep this to himself (I am afraid he has already told Salandria); any public hint of this will consign us all to utter ridicule and contempt and will play right into the hands of the WC-faction. Nothing could do more harm. If it is of any value, please convey to Dave my personal and urgent appeal not to endanger us all or jeopardize the tiny slender possibility we have of making a responsible and credible attack on the official case. Whatever he thinks he sees, he must remember the attendant circumstances and realize that what he is suggesting could not have been true without traces being evident in many different forms--and I see absolutely nothing to support such a hypothesis. Between you and me, it is almost on a par with Thomson's theory of Tippit as stand-in for JFK; but Thomson was dubious to begin with, while Dave, as you say, has made a crucial and valid discovery --the men behind the wall--and continuing in his present vein will end up by destroying that, too.