

15 July 1965

Dear Maggie,

Were you a reader of science fiction? Before 11/22/63 I was a devotee and on reading your very welcome letter of 13 July I was reminded at once of a recurrent theme—"parallel development." It seems to me that our two experiences at opposite ends of the country have been identical in many respects. I cannot now remember, really, how I spent my time or with whom before 11/22/63. In the two preceding years I had lost first my sister, then my mother, then my only brother, and my closest friend; and shortly after 11/22, my sister-in-law. I was so saturated with death and deaths that I should not have expected to experience any emotion on that Friday—yet, I felt an immense surge of rage that has not yet subsided. Never for one moment could I believe LHO guilty; and every shifting version of events only reinforced my conviction that we had not had the truth. Fortunately, one of my close friends (Isabel Davis, who lives nearby and with whom I share a love for cats, science fiction, and ballet, and whom I met some years ago much as I have now met you—because of a minor passion for study of "flying saucers" (UFOs) and the paranormal in general) either shared my reaction to 11/22 or didn't get a chance to oppose my views; in any case, she has since demonstrated that she does feel much the same. So I was never wholly "alone" and the inevitable attacks of self-doubt and discouragement were few and short-lived. I had the same experience as you did with various people for whom I had high regard—and a bad temper, to boot. And boot I did—two of my close friends, right out of my apartment, on two occasions (one friend each time, which is all the more embarrassing). What confounded me was that both these chaps are exceptionally brainy and objective, and excellent students of objective data, with independent minds, the scientific spirit, and quite contemptuous (in other fields) of the risk of being labelled "crackpot" and the like. Yet, on this transcendent matter, both had a violent emotional "set" and were completely unreasonable in assessing the facts (as they then appeared).

But, to return to the present, like you I have found much comfort in the people I have met, mainly at the New School, and now in my contacts with you. One really bad set-back has been the recanting of Curtis Crawford; but that is the only defection. Lobenthal puzzled and exasperated me greatly during the course; he was excessively non-committal at first; then, in the face of multiple examples of misrepresentation and falsehood in the Report, he countered with weird arguments (i.e., offering as against 50 lies 100 "truths"). However, since the course ended, he takes a more open position against the official case. He is particularly taken with the prospect of the dramatic reading of the testimony and is devoting himself to that during his free time this summer. Just now he is away, in Massachusetts, but will be back for a while before returning there for the month of August.

Certainly I shall ask him whether or not he is willing for his letter to be shown, in a good cause; frankly, I should like very much to see it for myself, since I gather that he has been more direct in expressing his personal views in that letter than he has been in discussion. But I am not sure how soon L. and I will be in touch. I am inclined to think that he has no objection or he would have said that he didn't want it seen by others.

I decided against inviting Sauvage to see the photographs at this juncture; frankly, I am still very tempted to tell him about this development, but on the other hand, he is a working journalist and I am a little fearful. Also, I have the impression that his book may have been his last word on the case, even though he was interested enough to come to the New School one evening. Subsequently, when the NY Times printed the story about Manchester (which I assume you have seen but which I will slip into this envelope if I have an extra copy), Sauvage was grandly indifferent; he had "seen" but not "read carefully" the story, and did not agree with the interpretation that most of us placed on it. Furthermore, he made some very disparaging and unfair remarks about Mark Lane, which saddened me, as did his gratuitous published insults of Buchanan. So I continue to hesitate...

I think that I did write you about the reactions of the others, although perhaps not in great detail. I was in a state bordering on shock that evening and have now only a vague recall (except for my anger with Curtis Crawford's boorish behavior). The next night another member of the group came, by herself, and this time I did not tell her anything in advance but tried an experiment. First I covered the bodies of the men standing on the steps and asked her what she saw, pointing to their heads. She could make no sense of it whatever; until I exposed the three bodies. Then, of course, she was amazed that the faces had not been recognizable as faces. Next I asked her to look at the area above and behind those three men, the top of the wall or fence and the foliage. She could find nothing, she said with great hesitation, reluctant to disappoint me. Good! I said, you weren't supposed to find anything there. Then I uncovered the section where the assassins are seen. She did see the first man and the puff of smoke; the man in the hat, she was very uncertain about; the man at the end, she saw clearly.

I can't honestly say that anyone reacted with the same intensity as I did --on the other hand, no one (except Crawford) scoffed or saw nothing. Meanwhile, I have calmed down a great deal--I no longer wake thinking about those murderers nor rush to the photo and the magnifying glass to be sure they are still there.

I am working like the sorcerer's apprentice, now that I am on vacation, and the flood has not diminished a whit. I have spent two days at the Newspaper Library, reading the Dallas Morning News on microfilm--something I had been unable to do while I was working; and I have reread and excerpted much of the testimony of eyewitnesses to the assassination who gave reports that have some bearing on the photos. And I've done just a little more indexing. Not much to show for four whole days. Without frequent stimulation (such as the Eisenberg call or the letters from Jenner and Ford) I don't seem to be able to produce at maximum. This uninterrupted labor since the Hearings came out has, of course, taken its toll--especially the period when I was very busy at the office and doing this work late at night and all the weekend. Perhaps it would be smart to take a week off completely--but I know that I cannot, even if I would. We are both riding a tiger.

It will be wonderful to meet you when you come to New York in October, Maggie, and perhaps you will be able to read my harrassment file and my manuscript. If the subject index is finished by then, I will hope to provide you with a copy.

As you say, we will write or phone each other when there are new developments--or just for moral support, when need be. Meanwhile, my very best,

Sincerely,

P.S. Don't forget to tell me the costs for the photos. I haven't had access to a tape recorder yet but will return the two tapes the moment it has become possible to transcribe or retape them. Okay?