

4 Jan 71

Dear Sylvia:

Thanks for your most informative letter of 21 Dec. The news that you have found corroboration for your discussion of the arraignment and of Givens is very exciting. Your presentation of these matters in Accessories was so cogent that I had little doubt that you were right. It is welcome news ~~that~~ not only that you have found support, but also that you can bother Ball and Belin. It troubles me that scoundrels are able to live serene lives, untroubled by their consciences-- they need to be bothered by other people's consciences. Nice work.

I have made some revisions in the writing of my monograph, but otherwise have little to report. The end of the school term and the holiday season-- the business associated with these, I mean-- have cut deeply into my time, so that I was not able to do many things that I wanted to do.

The monograph itself is virtually finished-- there may be slight changes in wording, but otherwise it is done. There are still, however, some important things that I must add as footnotes-- notably the collection of photographs, an important authoritative reference, and perhaps some test firing of my own. I am confident enough about these matters so that I can write in anticipation of results, but my discussion is not complete without the material supporting my assertions. I am sure that eventually I shall have it, but I can't say when. The source whom I had tapped for photographs could not provide them, so that I shall have to start another search in several different places. Other things are in the works. I am especially interested to see how far I can develop Dr. Morgan. I feel I have to tease information out of him, and that will take time.

Howard Roffman is a young man-- very young--17, I think-- who has been working on the assassination for the past few years. After initial hesitant contact, we became very close and exchanged many thoughts and sometimes bitter arguments. He is chiefly interested in matters dealing with the events on Dealey Plaza and with the question of Oswald's involvement. Other things interest him, but not to the degree that he puts himself out for them. He is bright and conscientious, sometimes (like all of us) does stupid things, but now and then digs up real nuggets of gold. (For example, going through stills of the Couch movie, he found evidence strongly suggesting that police officer M.L. Baker entered the TSBD very, very soon after the shooting-- much sooner than the ~~WR~~ WR suggests. The Couch film shows a motorcycle parked in front of the TSBD. Roffman surmises (correctly, I think) that the bike is Baker's, since the film by Weigman shows no bike in that place. Weigman's film was taken very shortly before Couch's; both were in the motorcade, and filmed as they turned from Houston to Elm.) He has been a very stimulating correspondent, and very helpful. When I set forth evidence that the autopsy docs actually saw the wound in the front of the neck-- not the incision, but the bullet wound-- he reviewed ~~ix~~ some of the records and quickly found corroboration in something that all of us had read and paid no attention to. I'll send you more about this later. To my mind, all that is lacking is the confession of the autopsy docs; otherwise I think the evidence is virtually conclusive. Roffman is writing a book, and wants all of his material treated confidentially.

I share your feelings about the Panel docs. I think, however, that they accurately (but not fully) reported what they saw in the photos and X-rays. I watch the rhetoric of their report carefully, and draw a sharp distinction between their observations and their conclusions. Their observations at first seemed to me so grossly to belie earlier medical data that I sincerely believed they had been shown pictures of another corpse than JFK's, or at least that the pictures of JFK were so ~~xx~~ adulterated that they did not really show what they were supposed to show. The ~~xx~~ material that they saw surely was carefully ~~xxxxxx~~ screened before it was presented to them, then the most revealing parts of it were removed from the list of things the Panel would see (e.g., not one photograph showing JFK's upper torso, neck, and head from the front; X-rays of the head taken from the left side, even though the wounds were on the right; and other things).

I am now satisfied that they saw pictures of JFK. I form this opinion not only on the basis of the fragments in the head, but other things too. And I am satisfied that they report accurately, though not completely.

The revelation that there were several small fragments in the neck was astounding (that, too, is something that I had predicted to Harold).

*I'll send this soon*



Mention of those fragments reminds me that I intended to send you the memo that I did on 399. Much of the material is not new to you, and the form is simpler than the issue warrants-- it omits much. Harold was then anticipating litigation, some of which involved 399. I wrote this memo in such a way that he could merely present it to his lawyer for information. The evidence presented in the memo I think proves that 399 lost not even one fragment, that except for substance that may have been worn off by attrition in the gun barrel or in its target (whatever it was), 399 lost no substance, at least not in the form of fragments. Keep the memo, but return the photographs-- they are my only copies.

Later on, I'll tell you more about the fragments in the neck.

I'm rushed now, and I must stop. I'll be in touch again soon.

Still,

*Dick*