

638 Royal Street,
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Dear Sylvia,

I thought it high time I dropped you a line; I recently read the two Bradford Huie articles on Ray in Look, and I wondered what you thought of them. I was quite impressed by the first one, and was all set for revelations in the second, which were not forthcoming. There were some neat insights from Ray, of the type which would most probably have emerged in the Kennedy assassination had Oswald lived. E.g., the question of why Ray took a bar-tending course but then did not get a job, etc. But I must confess I am suspicious of the whole thing. Allegations of a mysterious conspiracy are obviously self-serving as far as Ray is concerned, and "Raoul" could be a figment of his imagination. The very vague "outline of the plot to murder Dr. King" at the ~~xxxxxx~~ end of the second article was just too diffuse to take seriously at this stage, in fact almost at the 'National Enquirer' level: ("He was to be murdered by a white man, or white men, who would be described as "Southerners" and racists").

On the other hand, one has to confess, it is really hard to believe that Ray would have shot MLK, unless he was offered a huge bribe. Unlike the Kennedy assassinations--where I never attached too much importance to the question of motive--it becomes a big problem to explain why an escaped convict whose paramount concern was his own future should conceivably do such a thing.

I must confess I am not anything like on top of the evidence in this case--something which would involve studying newspapers everyday--as I imagine you are, and I am wondering if the Huie articles contain anything really significant as far as the Ray-lone-assassin thesis is concerned. For instance, what now of the FBI's suggestion that Ray may have robbed the bank in Alton, Ill., on July 13, 1967. Huie's account, far from providing Ray with an alibi, puts him in East St. Louis where he "stayed a few days". Alton is about 15 miles from E. St. Louis. Have you noticed anything significant in the various chronologies? As far as I know, nobody has yet explained the important point--which I believe you raised--of why, if the FBI had the gun with Ray's finger prints on it, they had to go through the elaborate Eric S. Galt route before coming up with Ray.

I wouldn't be surprised if the truth is some kind of a compromise: ie. Ray did it, but also was paid by conspirators.

I am still working two days a week for JG, and spending most of the rest of the time working on my jazz book. I had hoped to get it finished by Xmas, but I now see it will take longer. In any event I have collected a lot of good material. As you no doubt heard, Bradley was not extradited, so it looks like Garrison squeaked out of that one. I thought the Esquire article on Shaw good, and no doubt the truth. About all I can say on that is that Alcock recently expressed surprise at the time the Supreme Court is taking to decide whether they are going to hear the case. No doubt they are deferring it to a calmer political season.

Any news from Epstein, or his book? I have not heard from him since publication of the New Yorker article, (need I say it.) Also Turner's book should be out now. I hope to be in Washington for Christmas, and in NY around the New Year. I hope we can meet again then. Meanwhile I would be interested to hear if you have any news, or observations.

Best wishes,

Tom.