

2323 Ashmead Place NW.,
Washington DC.,
April 26 1967

Dear Sylvia,

Yesterday I met Mort Sahl. I went round to see him with Bob Richter at the Cellar ~~Room~~ in Washington, where he is currently performing. We spoke to him for about 20 minutes in his dressing room between shows. I liked him very much, but as far as his knowledge of the assassination is concerned, and his feelings about Garrison, it is all based on THE FAITH. Basically Sahl is a person I can understand very easily, because in an important way I am like ~~him~~; he likes to take a tilt at the establishment, so do I. I can't understand why I'm like that, but it's important to realise that it can seriously hinder one's critical faculty. Unfortunately, Sahl, and I suspect, Lane, do not see it this way. The way Sahl sees it, "they" killed Kennedy, and "they" are trying to stop Garrison now; but ~~xxxx~~ America is very lucky, so often she gets another chance; and the truth will out, you can't stop the truth, and basically, ~~if~~ only we knew it, there are more of us than there are of them, but they are trying to conceal this from us, and Mark thinks Garrison is wonderful, and Garrison has the truth, and our real hope lies with the youth of the nation, Amen. This is all very fine, but if Sahl was really honest with himself he would say something like: I don't know anything about the assassination, but I'm all in favor of Garrison and I hope he is right because if he is, he is going to make ~~the~~ lots of top brass in this country look pretty stupid, which is what I've been saying they were ~~alla~~ along.

The Saturday Evening Post article confirmed my suspicion that G. is very bad about reading things that are thrust under his nose. I think he only half ~~reads~~ them, and he mustn't be allowed to get away with this any longer. There was something on CBS about Novel being connected with the CIA - but nothing in the paper today. Did you hear anything about this? ~~Later~~; Ivon tells me Novel admitted he had been working for the CIA, and on the next day his lawyers denied it.

The difference between your forthcoming book and what I have to do is that it is sufficient for your purposes to show that such & such a conclusion is not ~~warranted~~ by the evidence, and there you can leave it. My problem is that I interpret my job working for G. as having to construct some ~~remotely~~ plausible bridge between N.O. and Dallas. He has not told me to do this but I am sure he has not already done it. Therefore some kind of a positive thesis has to be proposed - not such an easy task.

I keep coming back to this point, that Oswald was in some way involved, if nothing else he was framed. The gun which he ordered from ~~the~~ mail order house was found on the 6th floor of the TSBD, hulls found on the floor from this rifle, CE 399 in Parkland also fired from his rifle, and bullet fragments found in the car linked to the rifle. This latter, if genuine, is the most damaging, because it shows the gun was actually fired at the limousine, but it would be nice, I admit, to have an independent ballistics expert to examine these fragments. If they are genuine fragments from O's gun then I do not accept that they were ~~planted~~ planted there by the SS, because I do not believe they had access to his gun. If they are not from his gun, then for obvious reasons I would not believe they were planted, and so this means I think the fragments were genuine to the extent they were found in the limousine, but they may not be from O's gun.

It is to be noted that the evidence against Oswald pertains almost exclusively to his gun, as I do not accept the paper bag, nor can one accept his presence in the TSBD as being damaging, since he had been working there since before it was known Kennedy would drive past (a fact which to a certain extent militates against Oswald having any co-conspirators prior to the announcement date, November 19th.) His flight from the TSBD is not in itself too suspicious, though it would ~~be~~ ^{seem} very odd for Oswald to take a taxi. This actually suggests conspiracy, because it seems he was in a hurry to meet someone. If he had done it on his own, one imagines Oswald would have been quite content to ride home in a bus.

One therefore has to concern oneself most of all with the rifle, and somehow link it to N.O. Let us assume that the following is what happened and see what the difficulties are:

Oswald reads in Dallas Times Herald April 23 1963 that Kennedy is coming (probably) to Dallas that fall. (Query: what is evidence on O's newspaper reading habits? I know he read other people's papers in the TSBD but do we know anything about his Neely St. reading habits?) He leaves for N.O. the next day, with rifle in duffle bag. Arrives in N.O., acc to Lillian Murret, on a Monday. ~~Neither~~ (I do not have a 1963 calendar to check that.) Neither she nor Charles Murret handles Oswald's luggage. Marina later reports Oswald kept gun in his study in their Apt. on Magazine Street.

If Oswald was the fall guy of a New Orleans conspiracy...no, it just won't work. Basic question is, who took the gun into the TSBD, O or someone else? Assume someone else. Then question is, did Oswald know about it? Obviously he did, because it is far too much of a coincidence, or too implausible, to maintain that someone who, say, knew Oswald in New Orleans was lent Oswald's gun and later walked into the TSBD with it without Oswald knowing what was going on. If Oswald lent his gun to someone in New Orleans (I am assuming it was never stolen from him), and that gun later shows up in the TSBD, then O has got to be a part of the conspiracy that put it there. If so, then it is surely more plausible to maintain that he put it there himself. Then he wasn't framed. Back to square one. One is forced to admit that the problems involved in maintaining that someone else brought Oswald's gun into the TSBD are greater than the objections raised by Frazier & Randle to the size of the paper bag. If one accepts that Oswald brought the gun into the TSBD then it becomes hard to believe that he did so for a purpose other than shooting it at the president, unless he wanted to frame himself. This I don't believe, because we have little reason to believe that he could have got himself off the hook at the trial, no alibi is apparent; if he really was in the doorway and spoke to someone there to establish later that he was there, where is that person?

The more I think about this, the more I realise that the official version is, at least, the easiest to accept. It's all very well to say that the WR won't hold up, but if so, then another version of the facts is the case, and one has to try (or I do) to construct this other version, on a series of reasonable assumptions. Let us now assume Oswald in fact took the rifle into the TSBD and, at the very least, aimed it out of the window, but didn't shoot it. ~~He~~ He knew shots were in fact coming from grassy knoll, say. This is OK to the extent that it explains both earwitness as to sound of direction of shots & eyewitness such as Jackson, Couch, etc. Also OK in that it makes O a witting conspirator, who could have lent gun to unknown person to provide CE 399 to take round to Parkland. (As Schiller said, how would they know Parkland? Could anyone just walk in, after JFK was there, which it would have to have been?). I don't know how Oswald imagined he was ever going to get out of this situation, however, and it would be much more plausible to say that he not only pointed the gun out of the window but also fired it. Oswald now becomes assassin, unless he missed & someone else hit.

If Oswald had conspirators in New Orleans, when did he meet with them? He left Reilly & Co. on July 19th, thus giving himself 2 months to engage full time in conspiratorial activity. However the testimony of Rogers, Eames, Garner and Marina is quite consistent and fairly conclusive that no meetings were held at Magazine Street, nor were there even any unaccounted for visitors. Therefore any such activity must have been held elsewhere. I may be mistaken, but Rankin appears to have omitted to ask Marina about Oswald's habits and comings and goings in N.O. Is there any testimony on this point? However he seems to have sat at home reading most of the time.

This is all only half thought out and I think I will stop now. I enclose a page I did on the people who looked up at the TSBD, a page on Decker re Craig which is of no particular interest but I seemed to have an extra page, and an odd item about another brown paper bag.

Best wishes,

Wm. April 28th