

2323 Ashmead Place NW  
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Dear Sylvia,

My worries about Sprague were not that he was working for the CIA, which I do not believe for a moment, but that he was doing such a professional job that he must be working for someone. Therefore, who? I thought maybe LIFE magazine, he seemed to know so much about the Hughes film etc that I could not entirely believe he was doing it all on his own. Anyway I plan to keep in touch with him, and in fact strongly recommended him to N.O. today. I am surprised he did not assume I was working for Garrison as I told him I was ~~working for~~ from New Orleans. I found a document on Betzner 1 which will depress him as it says it only shows up to the 2nd floor of the TSB, but I also found a report of a woman who was taking photos from the 4th floor of the TSB which was surprising. Is this new?

I have been feeling quite depressed about the whole subject lately. I find, the more one studies it, and the more one studies Oswald, the less likely it is that he was involved in a conspiracy. He really wasn't the type. Today, when I called the office and asked for Ivon, I was quite surprised to be put through to G's office, and then to Garrison himself who calmly said he was Ivon and took the call. This was the first time I had ever spoken to him on the phone, and only the second time at all. (The first was for no more than five minutes.) He was very genial, pleasant and friendly, told me they were pleased with my work and promised me a raise, which was nice, and made me feel good, but on the other hand, and in retrospect, I was rather alarmed at his very debonair and relaxed approach. For instance, I mentioned the point which you raised in your letter which I got this morning, and he said he had already got your letter. He then proceeded to stick to his point and say that he had in front of him some document (which I did not get straight on) which maintained that p.47 was suppressed, claiming that they must be referring to different address books or something, and then he casually said "what's she upset about anyway, it's only a detail." I mentioned Schiller etc. who were on the look out for such errors in detail. He then dismissed Schiller. What is depressing about this is that the critics case is really nothing more than a large collection of "details" and one really cannot accept the erosion of any one of them with equanimity.

I am alarmed about the assassination because, I suppose, I am not entirely convinced that the Warren Report won't hold up. Epstein's defection worries me because, unlike people like Penn Jones & Harold Weisburg who immediately regard his change of heart as proof that he is working for the CIA, I regard Epstein as having written one of the more telling books in criticism of the Warren Report, he is obviously a person of intelligence, and just maybe he has changed his mind because he no longer sees sufficient reason for doubt. Let me give an example of an area which has recently given me concern: shots from the Depository. I am now fairly convinced that some-one fired from the 6th floor corner window. And therefore, why not Oswald? My reason for thinking this is basically the combined testimony of Jackson, Couch, Dillard and Underwood. There is no doubt in my mind that Jackson really did say that he could see the gun, and that Couch then saw it briefly. Dillard's picture corroborates this very convincingly. I don't see that there is any way round this. The Hughes film assumes enormous importance therefore, because I am prepared to believe that if Oswald (or whoever) was cool enough not even to look out of the window as the car was approaching Elm on Houston, then there was no one there at all. I mentioned the Hughes film to Garrison, and before I could even get the words out, he confidently + otherwise, why did he take the picture?

predicted that there would be no-one in the window. On the basis of what Sprague said, I corroborated this, but then Richter tells me he has seen a blow up of one still of the film, and that he interpreted it as being ambiguous, that there just might be someone there. My viewing of the Zapruder film showed me that these films are very much clearer in motion than when you stop them at a particular frame, and it therefore seems to me to be of number one priority to eliminate the doubt one way or the other on this question. Sprague, as I understood it, has seen this film in motion and seemed to be confident it showed no-one, but then he seemed the confident type.

If one accepts, as one might have to, that shots were fired from that window, then many of the other criticisms become rather academic, such as the lack of finger prints on the gun, the failure to establish whether it had been fired that day etc. One could only maintain these criticisms by claiming that another gun had been fired from that window, which I don't think I would be prepared to accept.

The real point is, I don't believe in conspiracy anything like to the extent that people like Weisberg are prepared to. I am prepared to believe in FBI incompetence, but I do not believe they were rotten through and through to the extent that there was an immediate cover-up for what really happened. I certainly do not believe in any Warren Report cover-up, though again I am prepared to agree that they failed to establish the truth through incompetence. I can accept that Marina was a liar, and I am just prepared to believe that there might have been some monkey business with the Dallas police. (Would the FBI cover-up for the Dallas police?) If one basically accepts the validity of the FBI & Warren findings, in so far as they go, then one has a <sup>difficult</sup> ~~postulating~~ <sup>postulating</sup> a conspiracy. Of course, if you think that everyone who disagrees with you is a CIA agent etc. then conspiracy becomes mandatory.

Your point about the rifle not being in the garage at all is I suppose the obvious option. My only qualm about this is that (unlike many), I basically believe in Ruth Paine as being a truth teller. I don't have the vols in front of me, so can you tell me, did she claim she saw the rifle in the garage, or did she just feel it in the blanket, or did she just see the blanket? Ditto for Michael Paine. From the point of view of a N.O. conspiracy of course, the best thing would be to have Oswald take it to N.O. and then not take it back ~~xxxx~~ at all, until it is brought into Dallas and the TSD by someone else at an undisclosed time with shells & CE 399 all ready to be put into place. However as you point out, the arguments which militate against the rifle having been taken out of N.O. work equally well to show that it was never taken into N.O.

I am continuing to work on Brennan. There is some very interesting testimony from NBC correspondent Robert MacNeill who says that a (FNU) Brennan spoke to him immediately after the assassination and reported activity on the grassy knoll. Is this new to you?

Richter says there was a "meeting" of the critics in NY last Sunday, can you divulge anything of what was said? I wish I could have been there.

Sorry if I sound depressing, but there is no point in this unless one is honest, ie honest with oneself. At any rate please do not write me off as a threatening CIA agent!

All best wishes,

Tom.