

17 April 1967

Dear Tom,

I heard from Dick Sprague that you two had met in the Archives. He was quite curious to know for whom you were working, but I told him that I did not know anything beyond the fact that you were doing research there. I gather you did not wish him to know your exact connections, since you did not tell him yourself, so I will certainly not give him the information.

Sprague looked me up only a few months ago and I don't really know much about him nor can I vouch for him. I must say in fairness that he seems completely on the up and up, has been working very hard on tracing photographic and film evidence, seems very ready to share his findings, and has not said or done anything that causes me to have doubts, suspicions, or reservations about his purposes or methods. Yet I do somehow have a slight edge of doubt—maybe because the wife of one researcher thinks (or thought) he was a CIA agent. Sprague and I had a laugh about that (the husband had told him that he was under suspicion) and I felt that I should dismiss the possibility. When you say that it is hard to believe that he is working on his own, did you have anything like that in mind?

I agree with you about the dramatic impact of the head bullet. As I say in my book, few things are more damning to the Commission than the fact that they viewed the Z film, they saw the effect of that head shot, and kept silent.

The Brennan matter is complicated and even a careful study and analysis of all the relevant testimony and exhibits leaves some questions unresolved. What does seem clear to me personally is that he was not the source of the 12:45 description broadcast by Sawyer. I too assumed at first that he had reported his observations to Sawyer, thinking he was a Secret Service official; but in fact, he was with Sorrels, and knew it was Sorrels; while Sawyer, for his part, testified that he did not speak to any witness in a hardtop (such as Brennan wore on his head). The Commission should have confronted the two with each other (Brennan and Sawyer) but did not do so; instead, with the known facts all but eliminating Brennan as the source of the 12:45 description, the WR asserts that he is "most probably" or "primarily" the source. The policeman to whom Brennan spoke initially was, I think, the patrolman stationed at Elm and Houston to control traffic--J.M. Smith, if I recall (I don't have the volumes accessible at the moment). Yes, there are many other serious weaknesses in Brennan's story--see Rush to Judgment, Inquest, and Whitewash, all of which deal with him; so does Sauvage, in The Oswald Affair.

Re: the Paine garage--it seems to have been kept unlocked and perhaps someone could have entered from the exterior without being seen or heard, but I rather think it would have been quite difficult to roll up the outside garage doors silently. The Paines and Marina, of course, had access to the garage; there seem to be no friends or neighbors who were on sufficiently close terms with the Paines to have freedom to come and go on their premises. Before going too deeply into the problem of removal of the rifle from the garage, one must examine the evidence that the rifle was in the garage. Perhaps it was; but even Liebler (as quoted by Epstein in Inquest) admits there is little evidence to establish conclusively that the rifle was actually there at any time; and in my book I go into some detail in order to show that there is considerable doubt about the actual presence of the weapon in that location at any time.

Re: Dougherty--he seems to have generally low intelligence and he is certainly confused and incoherent at times. However, this does not of course

automatically vitiate his testimony on the specific issue of seeing Oswald arrive at the Depository that morning. About this, he seemed coherent and quite firm.

I agree with your comments about Roberts, Schiller, and Epstein. In fact, I heard just the other night that Epstein now feels that the WR is probably correct, after all, and that his continuing efforts (i.e., the Esquire unsigned article) are frankly for money.

You might want to send your review of the Roberts and Schiller book to Ramparts, I suppose (I have no contacts with them that would be helpful) and perhaps to The Minority of One, which does not pay for articles published, however.

Re: Ruby at Parkland Hospital--again, I have a fairly elaborate chapter on this in my book, which sets forth the reasons which absolutely convince me personally that Ruby without a shadow of a doubt was there, just as Seth Kantor testified. However, his presence there is hardly in itself incriminating.

Finally, let me mention that I heard a tape of an interview with Garrison by Mark Lane and Mort Sahl on April 3rd, which was broadcast on Sahl's radio program in Los Angeles. During the interview, Lane refers to the suppression of page 47 of Oswald's address-book (CE 18), and Garrison picks this up and repeats the charge several times in the interview. Unfortunately, the charge is completely unfounded. Page 47 is reproduced in its entirety (XVI page 54), by photocopy and also in printed translation into English. I have written to Lane with a copy to Garrison, pointing this out. You might want to mention it too, in case the copy of my letter to Lane is overlooked in Garrison's office. I need hardly press the obvious point that it is most unfortunate if any critics of the WR broadcast unfounded charges--we need not make a gift of such avoidable errors to the Schillers, Roberts, and Liebelers, nor can we afford the carelessness, inaccuracy, and irresponsibility with which we charge the Commission. It may seem a mere triviality in this specific instance, but I am convinced that it is damaging to our position to go before the public with accusations which cannot be sustained, and which are easily seen to be inaccurate.

The entente which seems to have developed between Garrison and Lane causes me some apprehension. In the taped interview Garrison seems to corroborate Lane's previous suggestion that it was his book that inspired Garrison to launch his investigation. Maybe so. But Lane has serious weaknesses as a researcher and a critic (see, for example, the article by John Kaplan in the current American Scholar) and it would be unfortunate for Garrison to take for granted that this or that allegation by any critic is to be accepted as valid without authentication and corroboration. He is not so invulnerable, thanks to Russo and Vernon Bundy, that he can invite the criticism of having made unfounded charges with respect to suppressed evidence. (This paragraph is of course just between you and me; I recognize the considerable contribution Lane has made and I am certainly not hostile to him--on the contrary. But I do always regret avoidable errors, by any critic.)

My best,

As ever,