

2323 Ashmead Place, NW.,  
Washington DC.  
April 13th 1967

Dear Sylvia,

Thank you for your last letter with the information about the rifle etc.

I met Richard Sprague in the Archives yesterday and was most impressed with the work he is doing, and I find it hard to believe that he is working on his own. It all seems to be much too professional. The Hughes film seems to be an important, if negative, contribution. I saw the Zapruder film in motion for the first time on Tuesday and it really is a shocking thing to see - I mean the way Kennedy's head and shoulders are so violently thrown back into the seat of the car. After seeing that it really is impossible to believe that he was hit in the head from behind.

I have one or two more questions, I hope you don't mind (because I'm never sure whether the answer is staring me in the face in the WR); in the first place, I have been looking into Brennan's testimony, and in fact discussed it slightly with Sprague. Do we know (a) the policeman he initially reported to? and (b) the SS man the policeman took him to see outside the TSBG doorway? Or was Brennan getting this confused with Sawyer's "Command post". At any rate it seems as though the earliest broadcast description of Oswald was put out by Sawyer, and it seems to me possible to accept Brennan's testimony as being the means whereby a description of Oswald was obtained. However, are there any really serious weaknesses in Brennan's story apart from the fact that he couldn't have seen how tall Oswald was? I am working on a list now of all people who looked up at the TSBG during or immediately before or after the shooting. So far 11 names. Idea is to compare what they all saw, or didn't see. I am aware that among WC critics there is a sort of "Hate Brennan" campaign, but can this attitude be based on anything serious?

2. If Oswald was framed, someone had access to the Paine garage to get his gun. Was the garage unlocked? Also how could anyone have known it was there?

3. What do you think of Jack Dougherty's testimony and depositions. In one I found in the Archives he states that he went up to the 6th floor after lunch, then went down to the 5th floor where upon arrival he heard the shots. If so he was on the 6th floor seconds before the shooting. On the other hand his testimony is so obviously confused that no doubt everything he says is worthless.

I briefly met Schiller at his press conference in Washington for his new book, which I have just finished reading. What an unpleasant effort it is, though he is surprisingly lenient on Garrison. I find Charles Roberts' book even worse and more dishonest however. Schiller is a bouncy little dishonest-when-it-suits-him dragon slayer, as he sees himself, who makes some good points amidst the welter of ad hominem argument. Roberts is a type  $\bar{a}$  can't stand however, a kind of self appointed center board of the establishment who is appalled to find the boat being rocked nevertheless. His real concern is not the truth but that "The damage already done to the U.S. image overseas is almost beyond repair..." Now that's what I call a real jerk.

Presumably the new 25 theories in ESQUIRE is an Epstein effort. Strange, it has his stamp and yet seems to be basically anti WCR. On second thoughts, I think Epstein now primarily regards the subject not from a standpoint of concern about the truth, concern about the US image, or concern about anything. I think he regards it as good journalistic material with slightly amusing overtones. Whereas ~~George Thomson will~~ Schiller will quote George Thomson because he is hoping he will rub off on the other critics, Epstein just regards him as being funny. I haven't yet read the Ruby piece, but it looked interesting though possibly over imaginative. I am convinced in my own mind that Ruby didn't have anything to do with any possible conspiracy. I just can't believe it. Ruby would have surely said something about it if he had been. He wouldn't have been able to resist talking about it. I don't think this Gruber-Shaw connection is anything more than coincidence, although it is a little odd. Do you believe Seth Kantor re Ruby being in Parkland? Maybe we're going to have to come up with a 'second Ruby' theory!

Best wishes,  
Tom.

Enclosed is a piece I sent G about implications of consp. in N.O. & assass. in Dallas.

Was it the intention of those conspiring to assassinate President Kennedy to carry out their plan in Dallas?

In order to link a conspiracy in New Orleans to an assassination in Dallas it is necessary to show that this is a possibility in terms of the timing of Oswald's movements and the timing of the announcement of Kennedy's visit to Dallas. If it is not possible to do this then one either has to postulate coincidence, or Oswald not being involved at all.

There are obviously considerable difficulties for any long range conspiracy plan, in view of the fact that details of Presidential movements are never given out very long in advance. To the extent that exact locations etc. are not known, practical details of a plan cannot be discussed; however the general outline of a plot could be discussed, for use in any one of a large number of locations, eg. the downtown area of whatever city the president happens to be driving through. Before discussing this further the following dates seem important:

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|---|--------|
| 1. Lee Harvey Oswald left New Orleans:                              | Sep 25 |
| 2. Lee Harvey Oswald got job in TSBD :                              | Oct 16 |
| 3. Texas visit planned, (not announced):                            | June 5 |
| 4. Texas visit announced in Dallas Times Herald:                    | Sep 13 |
| 5. Visit confirmed by White House and announced both Dallas papers: | Sep 26 |
| 6. Motorcade route planned:   | Nov 15 |
| 7. Speculative motorcade route published: (Times Herald)            | Nov 16 |
| 8. Definite motorcade route published (Times Herald & Mor. News)    | Nov 19 |
| 9. Announcement of visit in New Orleans papers:                     | ??     |

10. Larry Schiller's statement at press conference. This was to the effect that there had been some talk, or rumor, of Kennedy's

\* visit, one day prior to Oswald's departure for New Orleans, which was on April 24. ~~I had written that this was a coincidence; it seems very important, if true, but I don't know if it can be.~~

Thus, from the above dates, we see that Kennedy's visit to Dallas was mentioned in one Dallas paper ~~twenty~~ 12 days before Oswald left New Orleans. On the other hand, this was an unconfirmed report, which the Morning News said the next day it could not confirm.

\* CE 1366 (vol XXII p. 618) contains the clipping from the Sep. 13 Times Herald. I now see that it also mentions: "On a visit to Dallas last April 23 Vice President Lyndon Johnson told the Times Herald he hoped the President would make such a visit to Texas. The Times Herald exclusively reported the proposed itinerary of the trip at that time."

The relevant issue of the Times Herald (presumably either April 23 or 24th) does not appear to be included in the Commission exhibits, which would seem to be an oversight, in view of Oswald's subsequent abrupt departure for New Orleans. Nor does this advance warning by LBJ merit a mention in the Report itself.

If we can therefore assume that Oswald went to New Orleans armed with the knowledge that at some stage later that year Kennedy would visit Dallas, we cannot assume that he knew either the precise route or that he would at that time be working in the Book Depository. It is indubitable that Oswald was working at that building before it was known that the motorcade would drive in front of it. Another point is that one cannot say that Oswald made an intelligent guess in assuming that any motorcade would come that way, because it is known that he attempted to get employment at several places before going to the TSBD, and he did not go to the TSBD on his own initiative, but on the initiative of Ruth Paine.

His employment at the TSBD therefore constitutes an attack point for the critics of any conspiracy involving Oswald and planned before October 16th. The point is this: If any conspiracy utilised Oswald's presence in the TSBD, either as Sole gunman, 2nd gunman, fall guy or whatever, this plan must have been developed after October 16th, because I do not think by any means can it be claimed that Oswald's employment in that building was pre-meditated.

Therefore a conspiracy hatched prior to October 16th must have been a vague plan between

Oswald and others to shoot the President from the streets or from buildings at which they were not employed. Oswald's subsequent employment at an ideally placed building must then be seen as a bonus to the plan, something that was not and could not have been foreseen.

In view of the fact that details of the conspiracy would, on this interpretation, have to have been worked out after October 16th, and preferably after Nov 19th, when it was known for sure that Kennedy would be driving past the building, then Oswald must at some late stage have been in contact with the co-conspirators, either by phone or by meeting them in person. If this is not assumed, then either Oswald was alone or he did not have anything to do with it at all. (In which case he was framed.)

If he was framed then someone knew who he was, where he worked, where his gun was, and in fact had had access to his gun. Also, if Oswald had nothing to do with the assassination, then ones whole reason for investigating his contacts etc. in New Orleans becomes pointless, except to the extent that people he knew in New Orleans may have framed him.

If it is assumed that he did make contact with co-conspirators in the days or weeks before the assassination, say while he was living at the rooming house in Oak Cliff, there is no evidence on record that such a meeting took place. Of course this does not prove that such a meeting did not take place, but at any rate it seems to be fairly well established that Oswald had no visitors and no phone calls at 1026 N. Beckley. Again this does not prove anything.

*T. Bethel*

I am working on a book review of Roberts & Schiller's books. Do you have any recommendations of where I should send <sup>it</sup> ~~them~~ ?