

18 January 1967

Mr. Tom Bethell
c/o Penn Jones
Midlothian, Texas 76065

Dear Mr. Bethell,

Long ago I resigned myself to the fact that Penn Jones does not write letters. Now I find that he does not talk either. I've just returned from Los Angeles, where I spent quite a bit of time with the Jones; Penn never mentioned your name nor that you were staying with him. And apparently he did not give you an account of my own circumstances at the moment.

I do appreciate your suggestions for addition to the Subject Index. I had planned, if and when there is the possibility of a new edition, to circularize all the researchers and critics asking for suggestions, additions, etc. At the same time, I have been hoping that the problem of a new edition would not arise--at least, not for a while--because I am working against time to put finishing touches on my 650-page manuscript on the Warren Report which is to be published in the fall--if I work rapidly but only next January if I allow myself to be detoured or distracted.

Because I feel that the book must come first, I am somewhat embarrassed by your suggestion that I should contact Mrs. Connell (Light) and try to get further information from her. To be frank, I am receiving numerous similar requests and commissions from various people with whom I am not acquainted but who obviously are taking a serious interest in the WR. In the last two weeks or so I have been contacted by some five people, asking me to undertake time-consuming work (i.e., send bibliography of articles; collaborate in study of films and photographs with view to pinning down frame in which first shot was fired; evaluate series of medical drawings based on testimony, prepared by artist; etc.). I simply do not find the time to take on any one of these projects--as you probably do not know, I have a full-time job 9:30 to 6 daily, and the left-over time is never enough to allow me to do my own urgent work, much less to take on new tasks.

I am not exactly saying a categorical "no" on the Connell matter; but I cannot promise to find time to do it, for one thing, and for another I would like to know a little more about you--probably you assumed that Penn had filled me in, whereas your letter came as a complete surprise. I don't have the time to go into my views on the Odio affair--I can only say that I am inclined to believe her and as you surely know, Epstein writes in Inquest that Odio, in the opinion of Liebelax, knew things that she could not have known from any other source had her experience not been genuine.

About Julia Mercer--it seems to me that I heard from someone recently that she had been located and interviewed. I'm sorry that I don't remember who mentioned that or any other details. It might have been that vermin Larry Schiller but I just don't recall. Or was it that someone working for Life found her?

I hope that I am not disappointing you unduly but that you will understand my predicament .

Sincerely yours,