

2 April 1967

Mrs. T. G. P. Cann
National Enquirer
655 Madison Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10021

Dear Mrs. Cann,

Thank you very much for your letter of 27 March 1967 and the enclosed materials, which I appreciate greatly. You have asked for my opinion of the story in the April 16, 1967 issue, which I take to be the story by-lined Stanley Ross. Let me say at once that I have no confidence in Ross or his interpretation of the Gongora affair. Ross is not a researcher on the assassination, in the true sense, by which I mean one who is in search of the truth, whatever it may be. His interest in the case appears to be solely in terms of political propoganda, specifically, to implicate Fidel Castro in the assassination.

Gongora seems to be a tragically deranged and violent man, with a long history of mental illness as well as physical degeneration (drug addiction, gonorrhoea, etc.). It may be that his civil and human rights have been abused by his incarceration in a mental institution; certainly that must be investigated and if it is determined that he is the victim of arbitrary or illegal confinement, every possible step should be taken to restore his rights. But I see no evidence to warrant charges or innuendo such as those Stanley Ross has made, in appearances on radio and television as well as in this story. On the contrary, CE 1444 reveals that Gongora wrote to Robert F. Kennedy, then-Attorney General, on 13 October 1963, warning him that President Kennedy was in danger from a Cuban woman exile (the wife of a Batista henchman) known as "the displaced assassin." Moreover, District Attorney Jim Garrison has made it clear, both in public and private, that he believes anti-Castro Cuban exiles to be implicated in the assassination.

Oddly enough, there seems to be some link between Stanley Ross and the persons you next mention in your 27 March letter--Richard Warren Lewis and his co-author, Lawrence Schiller. They produced a long-playing record for Capitol Records, "The Controversy," which was really an unconscionable and ugly piece of work. The history of how this contemptible record was made is too long and complicated to detail here, but I can assure you that Lewis and Schiller violated all standards of ethical behavior. About a month ago, I heard Stanley Ross on the Barry Gray show on WMCA, making the unfounded charge that "the authorities" had suppressed this Capitol Record. This seems like the wildest of fantasies: the simple truth is probably that the record just isn't selling.

I greatly appreciate the copy of the review^① of the Schiller/Lewis book to be released on April 26 by Delacorte. I have come to the personal conclusion that I will ignore both the article and the book rather than become ensnared in litigation that will only interrupt my research on the case, and divert attention from the evidence to personalities involved in studying the evidence. Litigation is a potential trap to inactivate the critics who have been slandered by this pair of "journalists." That they dare to call anyone a scavenger is

① Can you indicate the name of the publication in which it appeared?

the quintessence of effrontery: if you will consult the Hearings, Volume XIV, pages 402, 474, and 475, you will see that Schiller has been involved with the Ruby family from the very beginning, in a venal and commercial relationship, acting as an "agent" for the sale of a story by Jack Ruby and sharing in the proceeds thereof. According to Ruby's sister, Eva Grant, Schiller and his associate took 35 percent of the money, of which the Rubys received about \$23,000. It is likely that Schiller pocketed more money in that deal than any six researchers earned in the aggregate from their grinding, ceaseless labor on the case during the period of about two years or more after the assassination. If one or two critics (Lane and Epstein) did earn royalties on their books late in 1966, that was not foreseeable nor was it the motivation for their long unpaid labor.

Schiller and Lewis have not the remotest claim to disinterested objectivity. They are collaborating closely with former lawyers to the Warren Commission. Schiller has been involved commercially with the Rubys from the beginning. Moreover, you will notice that they attack as "scavengers" only those who question or challenge the Warren Report but have no mud to sling at such writers as Gerald Ford ("Portrait of the Assassin") or Jean Stafford ("A Mother in History") or others who defend the Warren Report--to say nothing of William Manchester, who will be enriched in the millions from his epic work of gossip, distortion, and outrageous inaccuracy, but who accepts the myth of the lone assassin.

You will of course understand that everything said in this letter is for your personal and private information and NOT for publication, attribution, or any other use whatever. I am happy to give you background information and my personal opinion but strictly on a confidential basis.

I cannot, of course, speak for either Mrs. Field or Mrs. Martin as to their willingness to be interviewed. My impression is that after the shameful violation of simple decency by Schiller and Lewis, to whom interviews were granted, they would share my own reluctance to be interviewed.

Jacob Cohen is not a professor; he claims to have taught at Brandeis University as, I believe, a history instructor. He is a dedicated apologist for the Warren Commission, whose articles have been published in The Nation and in Frontier (which has now merged with The Nation) magazines. He has fallen silent in recent months and I do not know whether or not he is proceeding with the book he planned to write in support of the Warren Report.

There are some inaccuracies in your list of names "for" and "against" the Report. Norman Mailer is in the wrong column: he is a sharp critic of the Report who has expressed utter contempt for it. The Citizens' Committee of Inquiry is, so far as I know, defunct. George C. Thompson seems to be not in full possession of reason, I am told, and some people believe that he may be a "plant" whose purpose is, by his espousal of wild and irrational theories, to discredit all the critics. "Malcolm McDuff" is Malcolm Kilduff, discussed in Manchester's book. Turning to Mrs. Field, it is not true that she "has financed Lane;" that is a pure invention circulated for malicious purposes. About myself, I am not really a widow, in the strict sense; my former husband died after our marriage was dissolved. I am "interested in flying saucers" in the same way that I am interested in other manifestations of Government lies and deceptions, insulting to the intelligence of the public in their grossness and transparency; and also because this is a scientific puzzle of enormous fascination to me as well as to Professor Allen Hynek, Professor James Macdonald, and other outstanding scholars and public officials.

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Accessories After the Fact will be out somewhat later than September 1967, more likely in November. It is true that I am an official of the UN World Health Organization, but since this is not relevant to my work on the Warren Report, I hope that it will not be mentioned. In fact, publicity mentioning my job may compromise my ability to continue in it, so I hope that you will take that into account.

I sincerely hope that my comments on the various matters raised in your letter will be helpful to you and of course I will be most interested in receiving copies of any further coverage of the case which may be published.

With cordial regards,


Sylvia Meagher
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