

16 August 1966

Dear Maggie,

This is the first opportunity to write to you. There has been constant clutter and traffic. So much so, that I had the wall telephone in the kitchen replaced by a table telephone where I do my typing, to save jumping up all the time (and, perversely, the phone fell silent, hence this respite). I hope that you have managed to relax and enjoy Paris. Clearly, the only way to get away from the case is to leave physically and geographically, and I begin to think I have been foolish not to commit myself to some kind of escape...but that is spilled milk...and I suppose I should not have been willing to miss the various developments--nothing terribly dramatic in the sense that a cable or overseas phonecall was warranted, but just the same, some items of considerable interest or importance.

First there was the terrible and chilling news about Lee Bowers, that I believe I sent you yesterday (first in importance, not chronology). How can one NOT feel grimly suspicious of the death rate--death by unnatural means--of the witnesses? I can no longer really force myself to "reserve judgment" and the usual crap--two important witnesses killed in car accidents in something like nine months, is that (as some of our colleagues may believe) only a statistical coincidence? Bowers was only 40; he was not speeding; there is no apparent reason for the "accident." I think more and more in terms of tampering with the car, or drugging the driver in some way, to produce a delayed reaction.

Second, and I seem to attach considerably more importance to this than some of the others, I received some information of significance from a forensic expert whose advice I had requested to help me to interpret the autopsy diagram of the skull (17E p. 46). I had been unable to make sense of it and, in particular, I had found no indication of the entrance wound in the back of the head (the existence of which is corroborated only by Kellerman, while the other four non-medical observers of the wounds fail to mention such a wound or in the case of Greer, did not see it).

Well, the reply was that there is no small round entrance wound in the diagram! Moreover, there is a fracture on the left, and perhaps near the left eye, which has not been specifically recorded in the autopsy report! Perhaps I am wrong, but I believe the information to be of cardinal importance--for I simply cannot conceive of the autopsy surgeon(s) diagramming head damage and somehow, innocently, carelessly, overlooking an entrance wound--IF it existed.

I was invited to lunch by the editor of NY Review of Books last week. I don't know if it came out of his pocket or his expense account--but I know what it cost me: two solid days of work. Before I sound martyred, let me hasten to add that it was voluntary. Curtis Crawford had written a lengthy letter to the editor disputing Popkin (and Epstein and Salandria etc.) on the single-missile-hypothesis. I have developed such a venomous contempt for Crawford and his nit-picking little mind that I leaped at the opportunity to give Popkin as much ammunition as possible for his counter-arguments in the author's reply. I am not certain of the date in which the letters will appear in the NY Review of Books, since Popkin is abroad, and that will delay things. Just before I left for the lunch with Silvers, I had a phonecall from Book Week, asking me to review the Sauvage book. I had to turn it down, regretfully, because Sauvage's extremely generous remarks about me in his book seem to disqualify the appearance--and perhaps the substance--of objective criticism of his work.

Had a few conversations with Ray Marcus, mainly about his opus on the stretcher bullet, which I thought was a fine, well-reasoned thesis, but unfortunate in its length--too long by far for almost any magazine, too short and perhaps too slender for a book. ### Weisberg has pushed me to the absolute end of patience, with his uncontrollable ego, his denigration of every one else working on the case, his delusions of persecution, and his accusations of plagiarism of his work. The latest accusation is against Popkin, a really insane letter, I am told. I don't even try to answer him any more. ### Lane's book is off to a fair start, with the Newsweek 3-page story. Lane is to be on one of the marathon midnight-to-dawn discussions tonight, with Roy Cohen and Kieran O'Dougherty (being a carbon copy of Roy Cohen and every bit as obnoxious and vicious). My opinion of Lane is just about as low as it can be--but I hate to see him letting himself in for the kind of dirty-pool those boys will dish out. They are pure and simple "red"-baiters and will not let him make a rational presentation of facts. Bravos of that kind can do no real good--and they can do great harm. ### Maggie, dear, let me hear from you. Love.