

Wednesday evening  
4th August 1965

Dear Sylvia-

The first part of your manuscript - that is, the first part you were kind enough to send me - is on its way to you, having been posted yesterday. I had promised to put it in the mail on Monday and therefore apologize for being a day late, but I had wanted to re-read it once before returning it and had not managed to do so until Tuesday.

This morning brought your three exceedingly interesting resumes of the 'phone calls (i.e. Lobenthal, Sauvage & Stamm). They have prompted me to write this letter for there are a few items therein contained to which I should like to address a comment or two.

1. Photos of Grassy Knoll:

While I am perfectly willing to accept the verdict of Mr. Lobenthal's expert photo interpreter that the material is "absolutely worthless" from the point of view of proving anything or of being the least bit conclusive - a position I have never adopted - I nevertheless continue to feel that, in view of the overwhelming bulk of testimony pointing to that area exclusively and in view of the distinct possibility that those are indeed MEN and not tricks performed by the eye, they (the photos) are "worth the study" and I fail to understand what he meant by "taking a position would open the door to ridicule". Naturally, at this stage, if one were to exhibit those pictures indiscriminately to people with even the suggestion that they are unquestionable proof of the existence of assassins or gun-men or whatever behind the wall, one would indeed open the door to ridicule. I can't help feeling, therefore, that those pictures are, indeed, "worth the study" by someone who is qualified to finally render a judgment as to whether or not those forms or silhouettes are what we suspect; and until the possibility can be unequivocally ruled out that those shapes are men (who, according to the Commission, are not supposed to be behind that wall) I shall continue to believe that the photos are decidedly worthy of study. I understand that Lobenthal's expert could not give an unequivocal opinion on the basis of what he was shown but would there not be an expert somewhere

who could either secure the negative or a blow-up of the original? In sending you the panoply of pictures, it was not at all my intention to have you (and those to whom you showed it) form the impression that they constituted any sort of proof or evidence. I sent them, primarily, in the belief that they could become the basis for serious future study, probing and provocation. I, too, believe that to use them in any conclusive sense is not only self-defeating, as Sauvage says, but irresponsible, premature and, as the expert says, an open door to ridicule. It may very well be that the entire premise is faulty, without foundation and an illusion. I have never, for one minute, pretended anything else. How, in the world, could I or anyone else make so dramatic a claim with so little to substantiate it? But, the distinct and very real possibility remains and the implications of that, in itself, are sufficiently cogent to the case at hand to merit a continuation of clarification. Surely, I can't bring myself to toss them aside as totally invalid and worthless simply because we do not have the means with which to explore the significance of what we think we see. Thus, while they should, under no circumstances, be used in any definitive manner to support any premise whatsoever, one cannot eliminate them entirely<sup>even</sup> in their present inconclusive state. I don't really know, at this point, what purpose they serve except that they just could be accurate! Obviously, the Navy expert has not read *The Report* for I do think that if he had read the testimonies of the more than 60 witnesses who point to the Grassy Knoll, he might have been inclined to view those photos with less skepticism! But, on the other hand, he might not have allowed those testimonies to interfere with his conclusion about the photos, at all. Some who have seen them have been completely shocked by them and others have merely shaken their heads negatively, either because they actually couldn't see what we see or because they thought we had had a few too many! So much for that!

## 2. Dramatic Readings:

I am in no sense qualified to comment on this subject at all. I think the basic idea is excellent but obviously its execution is another story. How they should be best presented - what to stress and what to eliminate - which of the many protagonists should be given the greatest emphasis, all of these considerations require not only the familiarity you possess but taste, selectivity and dramatic concept. I can only hope that, somehow, the idea will come to fruition and will not die for one reason or another.

Now, as for Sauvage - there are a few things I should like to say.

I shall begin by saying that of all the professional writers, lawyers, etc. (and God knows there is, even today, only a handful of them altogether!), who have been engaged in refuting the Government's case against Oswald, Leo Sauvage has, somehow, seemed to me, at all times, to be the most responsible, the most logical and the most unemotional of the critics. That is not to say, of course, that I would, in any sense, denigrate or underestimate the enormously valuable contributions of Mark Lane and Vincent Salandria. But there is no denying that Lane has managed to create much furor and controversy, whether merited or not, and thus has tended to turn certain potentially receptive ears away from the question - and, Salandria, although his treatments on the shots, wounds, etc. in LIBERATION were done with a minimum of editorializing and speculation and with an impressive respect for research, truth, detail and logic and are, consequently, enormously convincing and effective (they converted my husband, my son and a Doctor-friend who rebelled for months before their emergence) has restricted his argument to such a special and limited area that he has, unfortunately, gone unobserved, for the most part, except for the small segment of the population who may have been exposed to LIBERATION. But I must quarrel, nevertheless, with Sauvage on a few counts. To wit: I wish he would refrain from attacking Buchanan publicly, however much he may have cause to, and from lashing out at Lane, too. Surely, he should comprehend the folly of such pursuits and the harm he does not only to the very cause he seeks to champion but to all the rest of us who support his position.

To maintain that Lane has not made any contribution to the case against the Warren Report is, at the very least grossly unfair, and at the most, palpably untrue - for, despite what anyone may see to the contrary, it was Lane who forced the Commission to face and to admit a number of very significant facets of the case which they would surely have either denied the existence of or omitted entirely. So that, whether one is a Lane admirer or not, one must give him the very substantial amount of credit that is his due. I, therefore, begin to wonder if Sauvage doesn't have a more commercial axe to grind than he admits to! I am not going to attempt to make a judgment in favor of Lane. I don't know enough about the fellow, although I have met with him a number of times. Nor am I going to denounce him, - for the same reason. I cannot honestly say that I have found Lane less than forthright or correct in any of the statements I have heard or read of his, as regards the Report - and that, after all, is the extent of my interest in his relation to the case. So that, if he is truly unprincipled and contemptible, Sauvage must have

information or reasons with which I am totally unfamiliar. When Lane appeared here at the High School (early in December) vis-a-vis Ball, Selvin and Wirin (I sent you the tape of that encounter), there were a number of people who came to hear him, who were genuinely interested in the question and who could have been convinced by him, but who turned away from him as a result of his appearance that night because many of them seemed to get the feeling that he was a kind of demagogue. I, personally, was not able to cast him in that role and was surprised and disappointed by this reaction but it was undeniably there and among quite a number of people and I must assume, therefore, that he did make that kind of impression among certain people - but, I myself, was not of such a mind. He did call the Report "fraudulent" which possibly shocked a lot of people and he did make some very strong pronouncements against some of the more highly-respected members of the higher echelons of our government but to say that he was in error would be to fail to understand exactly what must be involved in this situation. Apart from that particular position of his, on that occasion, I ~~have~~ <sup>can't</sup> ~~possibly~~ <sup>help but</sup> ~~no reason to~~ wonder why he has stirred up such resentment. I'm not forgetting what you told me about the letter you sent to the Committee - and that was pretty shabby behavior-but it doesn't quite explain the concert of derogatory epithets with which his name has been consistently bombarded from the very first involvement he manifested in the case.

And now I must explain to you the story of the photos of the Grassy Knoll for there seems to be some misinformation and some confusion as to how and through whom I came upon them. Through Lane's participation in the above-mentioned foray, I met a man named Ray Marcus, who lives nearby and who had been vitally interested in the case from the outset. Until I met him, I had been working on it virtually alone with the notable exception of a good friend of long-standing named Ronnie Solomon. Until Lane's appearance in December, Ronnie and I were all there ~~was~~ <sup>In this case,</sup> in the way of dissenters, <sup>at</sup> least as far as either of us knew and about all we had to go on way back in the fall of '64 (prior to the publication of the 26 volumes) was Mark Lane's Guardian brief and the Report, itself. When I learned that Lane was to debate Belli in San Francisco, in November of '64, Ronnie and I decided to go up there for the debate as we wanted, quite apart from our interest in the matter, to find out for ourselves, if we could, what sort of individual Mark Lane really was - for we were reasonably sure

that he wouldn't be the ogre both the press and the Commission had painted him to be. It didn't take more than about the first ten minutes of the debate to take the measure of the two men, certainly as far as the case was concerned. Lane was cool, incisive, in total command of his knowledge, of the facts, and of the legal aspects. He didn't appeal to the emotions, he didn't rant and press, and he totally dessionated Mr. Belli - no small feat, since this was Belli's homeground, for one thing, and in addition the moderator was Jake Ehrlich, who was anything but impartial and almost fell on his face trying to aid and abet the flimsy position of Belli. It was quite a massacre and Ronnie and I came away with the greatest possible admiration and respect for Lane in direct proportion to our disgust with Belli, who obviously hadn't even bothered to open the pages of the Report and who found himself in the ludicrous predicament of defending the Dallas Police, despite the fact that he was trying at the same time to publicize his book, "Dallas Justice" which is an entire tirade of rebuke and outrage against the Dallas Police!! Well, forgive this digression but I wanted to go back and fill in some of the many missing pieces for you - all which finally lead up to my coming into possession of the photos. (Incidentally, for a brief time I did a very small amount of research on the volumes, during that period, for Trevor-Roper, who was here for one semester as a guest lecturer at UCLA).

Ray Marcus entered the scene at the time of Lane's Beverly Hills encounter, as I've said, and pretty soon, thereafter, Ray and Ronnie and I were telephoning each other back and forth and meeting from time to time. We had also met Diane Beason, who then headed up the Lane Citizens' Committee in Berkeley and came here for Lane's High School show. (We have long since heard nothing of Diane and we're reasonably sure that that whole operation in Berkeley faded, too, for lack of support). About two or three months later - in March, I guess, - we, each of the three of us, began getting 'phone calls from a chap unknown to any of us at the time, David Lifton, who is a graduate student at UCLA. Lane's N.Y. office evidently referred any local inquiries to Ronnie or to me. (Despite several attempts on the parts of Mrs. S., Mr. M. and yours truly to form an L.A. committee, we never succeeded). Now, Dave is a young, enthusiastic and rather naif fellow of good will and good purpose and he's totally absorbed in the case. He has an extremely keen eye and he is the one who first began to look into the Moorman and the Willis pictures. He would call one of us and communicate his discoveries over the 'phone and, quite

frankly, at first, we all tended to think he was having pipe-dreams and couldn't bring ourselves to take him seriously. One of the reasons for our conservative reaction to his conclusions was that he tends to go overboard, in this enthusiasm, and he does get a bit emotionally involved and this was manifested by the fact that he began telephoning everyone imaginable about what he saw in the photos-Salandria, Sauvage, Willis, Jones Harris, etc., etc.!! We tried to caution him against going off half-cocked that way before he had anything really substantial to discuss, but he was convinced of the veracity and accuracy of his findings and he couldn't contain himself. Ray Marcus is the chap who did the hypotheses on the Zapruder films which I believe I sent you or I guess I left the paper with Mr. Lobenthal. Well, finally Ray became interested in Dave's assumptions and, together, they went about the business of exploring the whole matter further. They began by taking the original picture that Dave worked on: (when I say original I don't mean 1st generation, for he managed to get hold of a 2nd generation photo, somehow) and having various kinds and sizes of prints made and finally the figures began to emerge so clearly to all of us that we had to admit that Dave had truly made a monumental discovery. When I saw Mr. Lobenthal in June, I only had the first few prints and it wasn't until I returned home that they procured the large blow-ups and the individual shots. The point of this long dissertation is primarily to disclaim any personal credit for the pictures or what may or may not be the facts contained in them. If credit is finally to be due, it goes solely and entirely to Dave Lifton. He has caused us all, as a result, to scan carefully every picture available in the exhibits until I now begin to think I see faces everywhere!

Dave -although I certainly can't pretend that I know him at all, really, appears to be a good person, with all the right instincts, etc., and while I don't know quite how to express myself without doing an injustice to the lad, I must say that he does go overboard in his excitement and has, I fear, been deemed a bit kooky in some quarters. But I do agree with his findings although I certainly don't feel that the photos are a convincing or even plausible piece of evidence, simply because there is still the question of the burden of proof.

Incidentally, yesterday Dave called me and was noticeably depressed. He now sees an altogether different premise in the photos. In addition to what he feels is undeniably there -the figures I pointed up in the panoply I sent you- he sees a whole added dimension which is even more chilling in its implication but I won't even attempt to

elaborate on this newest development of his because if it exists at all, and I tend to discount it at the moment, at least, it is still in too embryonic a stage to discuss.

This, then, is my way of trying to clear up the confusion of the "man in California" - I believe - to whom Sauvage had reference. I agree entirely with Sauvage that there is enough of a case against the Commission without those pictures or any other pictures. I do feel that he was severe in labelling the photos as "symptomatic of 'desperate and dishonest' people". If he is, indeed, referring to Dave's pictures, which I assume is the case, Dave is neither desperate nor dishonest and I don't consider that Ronnie, Ray or I fit the epithets, either. We honestly believe that we see what we see. But we also admit, without reservation, that we may very well be grossly in error and we make no claims whatsoever. This is precisely what I mean about Dave, though - for I suspect that he must have got carried away when he either phoned or wrote Sauvage and made some seemingly irresponsible claims or statements - and he is capable of doing that sort of thing without realizing how seriously damaging such an attitude can be. Again, all of this is supposition on my part for I have no way of knowing what he said or wrote - but I do know how he can affect people and how immature he is capable of being, at times. Again, in the final analysis, I must agree with Sauvage that the one valid and fool-proof way to refute the Report is on the basis <sup>of</sup> the conclusions drawn by the Commission as against the testimonies and exhibits which are directly contrary to the ~~those~~ conclusions -but, again, I wish that Sauvage wouldn't be quite so intolerant of everyone else's point of view. If you decide to call Sauvage again, you might tell him that I have begun the business of translating his book and would be happy to continue and to send him the finished product if he is seeking an english translation. (I lived in France, attended the University of Grenoble and the Sorbonne, was a French major at Smith College, am quite fluent in the language and have taught it off and on and am teaching it to two private people at present).

I love the way I began this letter (tome!) by saying I had a comment or two!! But, lastly, we come to the Stamm telephone conversation. You are correct in deducing that Salandria's photographic evidence is not the same as what I sent you. You are the only person to whom I have sent any photos or to whom I have ~~even~~ written about the case, except for the letter I originally wrote to Lobenthal, when I inquired about the nature and results of the course given at the New School. I do know that Dave has sent photos to Salandria, as I mentioned

earlier in this letter, and I believe they were similar to the ones you have but I have never actually seen exactly what Dave has sent out and am only going by what he told me which was that he had sent some copies of the photos to Salandria as well as to a number of other interested people such as Harris, etc. Salandria was, apparently, enormously impressed with Dave's photos, according to what Dave has told me - they have talked on the 'phone several times and have exchanged letters - but, if I'm not mistaken, Salandria has done some probing into that area on his own, independently of Dave, and has gone even further than Dave in what he believed he finds in them. He mentioned men and headsets and so on.

Dave has also 'phoned Shirley Martin in Hominy - this very recently - and reports that she is fed up with people calling her and making various claims and she is disgusted with Dave Dellenger and the Minority of One crowd and she feels that we should all drop the ball on the whole case because she is convinced, I gather, that it is so big and so powerful that we will do a great deal of harm in our continuing efforts to break through. You understand, of course, that all of this information is second-hand from Dave and that I am merely paraphrasing what I understood him to say of his call to her a few days ago. Strange how so many people have turned away recently! Incidentally, Dave also reported in a 'phone conversation, a few days ago, that he had called Ralph Simpson in Victoria, B.C. about the films Dean reported Simpson took on the fatal day. He didn't get Simpson but he spoke to a friend of Simpson's and, according to Dave, the friend reportedly scoffed at the whole thing and as much as told Dave that Simpson is an alcoholic or was drunk at the time of his call to Dean and that the whole matter of his films is nothing more than a hoax of some sort. I wonder! So many of the seemingly possible key figures turn out to be alcoholics, diabetics, manic depressives or pathological liars!!

Your index idea sounds absolutely marvelous and would not only be a tremendous service and inestimably valuable but would probably be a most unique contribution, not only for the present, but ~~for~~ historically for the future. I commend you and wish you all the success to which you are entitled.

If you do arrange a fall meeting with Stamm, Salandria and Lobenthal and, of course, yourself, I hope it can be around the 5th, 6th or 7th of October when I plan to be in New York! Would it be possible to arrange at that time, so that I, too, might participate?



In closing, one word more in relation to Salandria. If he is in touch with a group in Berkeley, it is not my group nor do I know who they may be. As I said, way back at the end of '64, there was an office in Berkeley, headed by Diane Beason, which was then the California branch of Mark Lane's Citizens' Committee - but none of us down here has heard a sound from Diane since she left here in December and we did hear, via the grape-vine, that she had moved on to other things and that the office was virtually non-existent. Perhaps there is another group up there now but, if so, I know nothing of it. "Mrs. Field's group", as you so magnanimously put it, consists of the same four people, Rhonda Solomon, Ray Marcus, Dave Lifton and me-- and that's the sum and substance of it! There is Mrs. Castellanos, whom I've never met and who has talked to Ray or Ronnie at one time or another, but she isn't in any group, per se, as far as we know and I don't know of anyone else who's in these parts and is interested (except for Geo. Thomson!!!and we decided a long time ago that he's daft and is doing harm in his own balmy little way!). I, therefore, know nothing more to tell you about the Stemmons sign than what I have already outlined to you in a previous letter so that whatever new development has been forthcoming on that particular item is completely unknown to me. Perhaps, indeed, someone up in Berkeley has hit upon something in that connection but we know nothing about it, in that case, and I know absolutely nothing more on the sign than what I've already communicated to you. Please be assured that if there ever is anything the least bit valid or worthwhile to pass along to you, I shall not fail to do so with dispatch. This you can count on.

And now to bedsin-bye! I started this at about 8:30 and it is now close on to midnight!

Thanks to you, Sylvia, for your wonderful supply of information and material. I am so indebted to you and appreciate your attention and responsiveness more than I can possibly express. The second portion of your manuscript will be forthcoming in about 2 more days if you can extend your patience with me till then.

With warmest regards always,

Maggie .