

19 February 1970

Dear Paul,

Thanks very much for your letter of the 15th and especially for the LA Free Press article which you enclosed. It does indeed read as if it had been written by that "leading authority", Stanley J. Marks, Himself! Heaven help Marks when Harold Weisberg learns that his title, Coup d'Etat, has been appropriated. Harold some years ago completed a manuscript with that title, not as yet published, and you know how he reacts to real or imaginary borrowings from his Works.

I have a copy of Murder Most Foul by Marks, the series of questions and answers, which was not only inaccurate and sloppy but a most crushing bore. However, I am excited by the possibility that he has obtained, presumably from the Archives, a "letter written by Lt. Day within a month of the President's murder" admitting that Day "never found Oswald's palmprint...on the Italian rifle." If Marks is not making an unwarranted construction of the actual text of this alleged letter, nor exaggerating its significance, then he has made a find of cardinal importance. As you know, I have strongly questioned the authenticity of that palmprint, as have other critics. While I suspect that the palmprint was fabricated, I can hardly believe that Day would have admitted in writing that it was a manufacture.

As to preventing the LA Free Press from printing irresponsible nonsense--believe me, I have tried in the past, and not only did I not succeed but I got myself on Kunkin's shit-list, to boot. He had once visited me, during a trip to New York, and was quite cordial then and subsequently. But he became very hostile when I began to write to him, taking issue with the hysterically pro-Garrison stories and editorials which were appearing, and abruptly stopped even sending me the paper.

Are you on the mailing list of Bernard Fensterwald's "CIA"? I received some material from him the other day--a progress report, bibliography, copy of a letter he wrote to Warren and tried to deliver personally, only to be turned away, etc. Let me know if you would like me to xerox this material and send it to you.

Tom Stamm has called my attention to what appears to be a quite important article in the December 1969 American Rifleman, which presents a method for evaluating the dispersion factor of a rifle, of the ammunition, and the shooter. It is far too mathematical for me to comprehend but it does seem to discredit the Simmons/Frazier testimony on the accuracy of the C2766 rifle, as Stamm believes.

So far as I know, the press did not report Liebeler's peccadillo; I know of it only from Dave Liften.

I suspect that my ramblings and speculations about fingerprints are more subjective than scientific; yet it does seem strange to me that he should leave only one fingerprint on a magazine that he handled...or, for that matter, that as regards the cartons on the sixth floor, he left only one fingerprint and/or palmprint, while the police and FBI clerks who handled the same cartons subsequently each left numerous fingerprints. I would not press the point without knowing what the statistical averages are, as regards prints left on comparable articles, both in random samplings of any individual's possessions or in actual criminal cases involving ~~identification via~~ fingerprint identification. Taking account, of course, of a conscious effort by a suspect to avoid leaving his dabs on a weapon or other article.

Best regards,