

3 February 1970

Dear Paul,

I have read and then re-read carefully your notes of 1/21/70 "FBI Lab Examination of Alba's Magazines" and I find myself fascinated by the incident of the unidentified "best friend" of Adrian, about which I learned for the first time from your analysis. Before discussing him further, let me make a few comments on other matters touched on in your notes.

Random comments: Field & Stream, though not a gun magazine as such, does carry ads for guns and firearms, see Accessories, footnote page 48. Thumbprint: If you handle a magazine enough to leave any prints, I should think that you would leave multiple fingerprints, not one print from one thumb. It would be interesting to dust a random selection of magazines from anyone's apartment and see how many have no prints, how many have prints from both hands, one or more than one digit each, and how many have one print only. Especially if a page has been mutilated by cutting out a coupon, I would expect to find prints on that page.

If you wish to speculate that Oswald might have ordered an ammunition clip and/or ammunition using the coupon from the June 1963 American Rifleman (and I assume here that the ad on page 59 offers the clip and the ammunition for sale by mail order, although you do not say so explicitly), you must assume that he did so while in New Orleans, and received the item(s) while there, through his New Orleans PO box (the only one, if I recall correctly, at which "A. Hidell" was also authorized to receive mail). But in that case, where did he get the ammunition used in the Walker shooting? [⊗] And what became of any ammunition ordered from Klein's via the June 1963 ad on page 59? As I recall, ammunition was offered in other Klein's ads in boxes of 50. How does one dispose of 46 cartridges (or even 21) other than by actual firing? *or more.*

As to the differences between the Italian military ammo and the Western Cartridge Company 6.5 cartridges, one difference is that the latter are apparently stamped or marked "WCC". Fritz and Day must have known as of 1:30 p.m. on 11/22/63 that "WCC" ammo was used, from the live cartridge recovered from the rifle chamber. I have always found it very puzzling that Curry and Wade leaked everything imaginable to the press during these first days but neglected to say that a particular brand of ammo had been used, or that a clip had been recovered still in the rifle (or recovered at all). I feel sure that the first time I heard of the existence of the clip, or the brand of the ammo, was upon reading the WR in September 1964.

The WR says that the WCC ammo was readily available from mail order houses and a few gunshops. It is inconceivable to me that they did not carefully check Klein's to see if they ever carried WCC ammo, and I feel entitled to assume the answer was negative. When you consider the intensive canvass conducted to try to establish Oswald's purchase of WCC ammo from shops in the Dallas/Fort Worth area, it seems even more certain that a careful check was made of Klein's sales records, also with negative results.

Now to the "masked stranger." If he was a legitimate friend of Alba's, his timing is arresting. He chooses the Saturday morning when Alba is customarily relieved by a substitute--almost as if wishing to avoid Alba himself.

(Letter interrupted here, resumed 2/5/70)

His timing is even more curious in relation to the assassination. The very first thing in the morning...before even the FBI or SS turned up. Question: Was it generally broadcast or published by the morning of 11/23/63 that Oswald had lived in New Orleans for some months that year, or had worked at Reilly's coffee plant?

⊗ which of course I believe he was not involved in at all.

I think it probably was generally known by evening or late night on 11/22/63. The visit by the "masked stranger" could still be unrelated, of course...but there is the impression of urgency, haste to leave Alba's premises as soon as possible (before the feds and/or Alba himself turned up?)...and the eccentricity of such an errand given the obsessive fascination and emotion of the hour, when everyone I knew cast aside everything else of a personal or business nature and could only listen to broadcasts or talk about what had happened in Dallas.

Certainly it is quite possible that some friend of Alba's was totally indifferent to the assassination and that the quick call was wholly unrelated to Oswald. But if you postulate that there was a group involved in setting up the crime, or in setting up Oswald as the culprit, then you are left with a conspirator hastening to remove or to plant a piece of evidence---a possibility, however remote, to which the FBI seems to have been curiously indifferent.

Reverting to the Feb. 1963 American Rifleman--apparently Oswald had access to a copy which he possessed or borrowed or filched, from some Dallas "Alba." I don't think this magazine can be purchased at newsstands, at least not in New York. It is distributed through subscription, I imagine. Questions to be pondered: Did any of Oswald's acquaintances or associates subscribe to the AR? Or could it be purchased as a single copy? Or was it stocked by the public library? What were Oswald's usual habits as to saving for long periods of time those periodicals to which he did subscribe? When I get a moment I will search my files to see if we can determine the names and dates of magazines recovered in searches of his belongings, which may throw some light on his inclinations.

It is really frustrating to get hold of such a provocative piece of information but be unable to pursue it further and resolve its meaning.

Since starting this letter a few days ago I have received your note with the ad for Bringuier's book. Thanks for the warning ("too expensive at half the price"), I will save my pennies. Have also heard from Kerry Thornley after a very long silence, to the effect that he suddenly received notice that Garrison wanted to bring him to trial on the 16th of this month. What vindictive folly! I suppose he has another Speisel up his habeus corpus. I trust that you have already heard the exhilarating news of Liebeler's Waterloo--or, rather, his Chappaquiddick.

Pardon the rambling in this letter but I haven't been able to be as orderly as I would like, because of all kinds of flaps and crash jobs here at my office. Thanks again for sending me your notes on the Alba magazines and the mysterious stranger. All the best,