

December 17, 1973

Dear Sylvia,

Thanks for your note of the 27th. It is good to hear from you again.

I have gotten several reports on the CTIA conference now, none of them good. Apparently there were more than enough crazies running around.

A week ago, I bought Belin's shameless book, and naturally I wondered if you were going to review it or otherwise respond. I have read only the first part, but this book can really be judged by its cover and index. The first thing I noticed was that he doesn't mention you or Harold, or any of the critics except Lane ~~xx~~ and Epstein. Nothing on the Nash article, Clemmons, Frank Wright, and any number of other key persons. I get a very negative impression of Belin as a lawyer and as a person from the introductory material. I haven't checked my files systematically, but I did remember a few items that you might be interested in if you think Belin is worth responding to. One is a letter which Goldberg sent to FBI in October 1964, with a copy of the Nash article from the New Leader about the Tippit witnesses; at least Goldberg took it seriously. (I don't think I have the K FBI's ~~xxx~~ response.)

Another exchange of letters concerns the problem of where the DPD got their description of Oswald, and why they went after him ~~when~~ when they found out he was missing. Belin completely distorts this problem by talking about the reasons for Oswald's arrest in the Texas Theater. Goldberg wrote the FBI some time after the Report came out, suggesting further investigation; the FBI replied by citing a January letter in which they had 'explained' the source of the description and indicating there was no point in checking it out further.

I think I have only a few memos written by Belin and Ball, since I don't think they produced ~~many~~ many interesting ones, but I have a number written to them. I would not be surprised if a number of the problems pointed out to them were never resolved.

In 1971, I was making various requests under the Freedom of Information Act to the CIA, mostly dealing with the photo of the unidentified man. On 12/14/71, the Executive Director ~~XX~~ (L.K. White) sent me a 2-page letter, with some information ~~xxx~~ about the photos and a general defense of the CIA's policy on withholding; at the end he ~~xx~~ added "Since you are obviously a student of the whole Warren Commission problem, I am enclosing for your files an article from The New York Times of 22 November 1971, which you may not have seen previously." (Belin's article) I thanked them for the article, pointing out that "Mr. Belin took the same broad approach, focusing on the Tippit killing, in a recent article which purported to respond to (but actually evaded) specific charges about Belin's work made by Mrs. Sylvia Meagher ... (Reference given) I trust that any of your analysts who have been following the assassination controversy in detail can recognize Mr. Belin's article as a smokescreen - more precisely, the summation made by a ~~skillful~~ skillful prosecuting attorney when the facts do not back him up as he had hoped they would."

Naturally I was quite amazed to be receiving clippings from the CIA. This was at the time they were revamping their public image - talking to the press more, and ~~xx~~ hiding their covert activities better. I don't know if it would be fair to consider this some sort of CIA endorsement of Belin; I really didn't know what to make of it.

One more point - Belin quotes Jackie's testimony, with the original ~~deleting~~ deletion. This was released (after my request) last year; several hundred pages of non-CD material has been released in the last couple of years. The deleted reference to the wounds is less ~~interesting~~ interesting than a couple of things that were changed without any indication: e.g., she said that Connally screamed "like a stuck pig" and that she had often thought that if she had pulled JFK ~~over~~ over the second shot "would have hit Gov. Connally" - this was changed to "would have missed him." (!)

I would be glad to send you any of this material that interests you. Sincerely, P.L.H.