

March 30, 1976

Dear Sylvia,

Thanks for your letter of the 23rd. I'm sure Jason and Susan missed a good party. (Jerry did report to me about it.) One of the most consistently frustrating things about Random House is that it seems to be corporate policy never to give you a straight negative answer - I guess they're worried about hurting our feelings, but it really drives us up the wall. For example, we were told that a publicity person would contact us momentarily from mid-December through January, when it is now quite clear that she had no intention of even calling us until the book was in her hands. And we get a lot of "your check is in the mail" nonsense. They make J. ~~Edgar~~ Edgar look like a model of directness.

On the Givens deletion, we have talked to a few people, but nobody has really picked up on it yet. I guess this is the time to just mention it to everyone who might be interested. I told George, who was quite interested in connection with an anti-defender piece (on Cohen, Belin, &c) he was thinking about, and I believe he discussed it with Anson, but nothing seems to have come of it. I told Norm Kempster of the L.A. Times, and David Martin of AP (who was interested enough to copy down the deleted sentence). I have asked my coeditors to write Cockburn at the Voice (since they both have met him), and I think that has just been done.

We were given an advance sales figure of around 10000, I think, and have heard nothing since. Who knows what RH has screwed up here; one major Berkeley bookstore somehow didn't get the usual chance to upgrade the automatic advance order; thus, they only ~~for~~ got about 6 copies, and didn't expect to be able to get more for about 3 weeks! I would assume that a drop in sales is to be expected until the advance ~~copies~~ copies are all sold. I did see the ad in the NYT (also in the L.A. Times, the S.F. Chronicle, and New Times (1/3 page)); apparently it ran 2 weeks ago but not last weekend. I haven't the slightest idea how much advertising they plan.

I have received the 655 pages of CD's from the Archives; it is largely junk, things like phone and bank records and appendices, with the names still deleted. I haven't had time to do any notes yet. The 1500 pages just released by the CIA are much more interesting; you may have seen some of the AP stories on them. (Re ~~Rocca~~ Rocca pushing the Castro hypothesis for the Rockefeller Commission; Nosenko; Drew Pearson as a source, etc.) There is a lot of junk here, but about 50 pages are particularly noteworthy. I haven't had time to make notes yet; shall I send you these pages and the notes when I can? One item about RH was sent with my last letter, which ~~was~~ crossed yours in the mail. Another amusing one has to do with my suggestion to Shannon that Belin should not be in charge of the RC's investigation of the JFK case; in the CIA's memo on this, the names of Belin and Robert Olsen of the RC were deleted, and replaced by "agency official." The CIA says this is a ~~clerical~~ clerical error (which is certainly true, regardless) and Belin denied to Kempster that he was ever a CIA agent. I'm convinced he's not smart enough to be CIA, but it may be significant that the CIA let this 'clerical error' occur. I have also heard nothing from Anson about the CD's, and I do plan to order a few more pages (probably about 100) - I'll keep you informed.

I did see Anson's piece on the Schweiker investigation. I get the impression from a couple of people that he might be wrong in his pessimism. We'll see - ~~that~~ the latest I have is that the ~~Church~~ Church report is due 4/6, and the Schweiker report may be at the same time (or later, or earlier). I really don't know what to make of the third rifle photo. I am leery of any analysis of the discrepancy in the length of the rifle, since it is not trivial to take leaning into account, etc.; and I have never been fully convinced by the arguments that the photo is a fake. (The more we learn about the FBI's breakins at the SWP, and the COINTELPRO, the more ~~a~~ fascinated I am by the L.H. letter in that issue of the Militant.) It is quite significant if some cop picked it up as a souvenir and then lied about it, but it would be even more important if he had it before the assassination. I don't see anything about this photo to distinguish it from the other two.

Regards,
Paul PLH