

SM

February 24, 1978

Dear Jim,

I just received your note of the 20th, and the very interesting documents. I'll copy them for Mary and Sylvia as soon as possible, and then make no further distribution until I have had a chance to read them carefully and we have discussed what can and should be ~~xxxx~~ done with them. We are in the process of moving, so I haven't had time to read them properly yet.

Our new phone number is (415) 525-1980. Until the old phone number goes away, try both of them. We won't finish moving until about March 6.

Enclosed is a piece by Russ Stetler in the forthcoming "Inquiry." Russ and I generally ~~xx~~ agree (which is no coincidence). I think the piece is quite good, especially the last column.

Also enclosed (not to SM and MEF ~~x~~ unless requested): Zodiac, 2/20-21, on Lane's latest charges against Burnham-Leary-Lardner, the CIA and FBI, etc. This has convinced me that his wrong-headed analysis of the Mexico evidence in the Free Press shouldn't be read as a shrewd attempt to smoke out more evidence by getting the CIA to deny that they killed JFK and framed Oswald. I don't see how anyone could be that clever and also pick a fight with the Washington Post - a fight he can't win (except on the ~~xxxx~~ college campuses; if he's after hearts and minds).

~~xxxxxx~~ Also enclosed (AIB, not SM, MEF): Reuters, 2/19, on Epstein. I saw New York's Epstein story (2/27 issue) late last night, and I've been thinking ~~xxxx~~ furiously about it ever since. Overall, the book seems to be less (about the assassination) ~~xxxx~~ than had been rumored - unless they are still holding back. It looks like he has ~~xxxx~~ a very interesting and important story, which may be less related to the JFK assassination than he thinks - or at least in a different way. I gather that he's done this book in a characteristically Epsteinish way - he's presented a story which is basically important and valid (the whole flap about 'moles' in the CIA & FBI) but he may not have approached the implications re the JFK case in a critical way - that is, he seems to have accepted Angleton's rather extreme world view. In Inquest, he shied away from the implications of his conclusion - that the ~~xx~~ autopsy report was faked - and he may be shying away from Angleton's beliefs (if he does ~~x~~ so believe) that the KGB did in JFK. Anyway, I have lots of questions, and ideas. Possible sources: Schorr's book on Nosenko; ~~xxx~~ the big Coleman-Slawson memo (which, as I recall, considered and rejected the hypothesis that the KGB had helped put together a fake Oswald diary; Epstein seems to believe this); the RC Report on Nosenko; lots of documents in the Fensterwald CIA collection.

Some general ~~x~~ approaches: granted that the KGB's non-interest in Oswald would have been odd, what do we make of the CIA's non-interest? ~~xxx~~ Where was Angleton when they needed him? Where is U.S. intelligence in Epstein's Oswald legend? What does Slawson think? What about the context when Nosenko defected - false anti-Russian reports? I'm willing to believe ~~xxx~~ that he was a plant, even if his story was true. Even if the KGB lied about their contacts with Oswald, what conclusions can be ~~f~~ drawn? After all, other people lied about that too; the ~~xxxx~~ destruction of the Nesty note doesn't implicate the FBI in the assassination.

A tough question (extra credit, 15 points): relate the Angleton story to the Roselli-Amlash stuff. What if he thought the KGB 'mole' ~~xxxx~~ was involved in the plots against Castro?

I'll try to put some of my ideas into coherent form soon. (Discretion in the meantime, since Stetler hopes to review Epstein's book and I would like to help.) (That is, I don't ~~xx~~ want to initiate press interest now, but would like to influence it where ~~xx~~ it is occurring.) I'm looking forward to seeing the book, of course.

P.S.: It was edited out of the excerpts I saw, but Haldeman's book states (pp. 39-40, 219) that he ~~xxxx~~ wanted to dig up the truth on the JFK case, but Nixon ~~xx~~ turned his project down!

Sincerely,
Paul
PLH