

14 September 1979

Dear Paul,

I am enclosing my "instant comments" on your manuscript. As you will see, I comment on each section as I read it but do not deal with the book as an integrated whole.

It is, understandably, of somewhat uneven quality. For an "instant book" it has considerable merit. Understandably, also, it discusses the HSCA Report selectively, giving little or no attention to major segments of evidence such as the autopsy. One element that troubles me is that often the manuscript seizes on a specific piece of the Report as a springboard to range far and wide into non-Report material, which seems to me to receive inordinate emphasis and attention in a book which I assume is intended to be a critique of the work of the HSCA.

It seems to me that the unifying ingredient in the book should be an evaluation of the Report and of the areas in which it is not possible to accept its findings. This approach is, in fact, to be found in the manuscript or at least in portions of it.

As you will see from the enclosed comments, I do not believe that Pat Lambert's piece really fits into the book. As for Mark Allen's memo on the CIA and Oswald in Mexico City, I have seen and admired his past work in that area which may or may not coincide with the work he submitted for possible inclusion in your book. But, sight unseen, I would suggest that you use it because (1) there is not now enough attention to the Mexico City business and (2) Mark's work in that area is authoritative and well-written, judging from what I have seen of it.

I am troubled by Peter's several contributions. They depart from essentials into labyrinthine and byzantine digressions which lose the reader's interest and ultimately go beyond the reader's grasp. They need ruthless editing and the introduction of greater clarity and order. I hope that you will find it possible to keep these comments between the two of us; but if you feel that you need to use them for leverage, okay, do it. I have great respect and affection for Peter and I do not want to be hurtful but in honesty his sections of the book seem to me to scream for reworking, both as to content and presentation.

I hope that my comments are not entirely unhelpful. I would urge that despite the rush to meet a deadline, you make sure that a good index is prepared and included in the book. Equally important, you need to ensure that citations of sources are carefully and fully footnoted. Throughout the manuscript, except for Peter's chapters, I found myself asking in vain for the source or the documentation.

All this being said, I congratulate you and your colleagues for the massive and often creditable work you have produced under severe time constraints and other handicaps.

Like you, I am very unlikely to attend Bud's conference. I think I can accomplish more by continuing the work of indexing. All the best, and thanks for the trust and confidence implied in asking me to look at your ms. You may be sure that no one else will see it or know about it.