

September 25, 1970

Dear Gary,

Thanks for your letters of September 5 and 20, with your comments on my draft report on the melon experiments. I am working on a substantial revision, and I will respond to your specific comments at length later. I will certainly have to make much more clear the distinction between what the experiment could prove (that the laws of Newtonian mechanics do not imply that the backward motion proves the shot came from the front), and my own opinions about what can reasonably be inferred. Of course I know the difference between a head and a melon; to present a counterargument to Thompson's case one does not need to do a simulation. It is my considered opinion that there is no persuasive other ~~xxx~~ evidence of a shot from the front - that is, taking into account the contradictions ~~xxx~~ in the medical evidence, the generally low value of eyewitness testimony, etc. That is just my opinion, of course, and I have been away from the medical evidence for some time. If you feel otherwise I would welcome your arguments. (A brief outline would be good enough; I realize you are pressed for time.)

I was not aware the you had hypothesized a double hit on the basis of the medical evidence, as you point out you did some time ago. My intention in sending out the draft was to get such information. I wanted to have as much information and opinion as possible before Alvarez finished his own report of the experiment. The fact that so ~~xxx~~ many of ~~xxx~~ the responses I got involved taking what I said grossly out of context, and that I apparently gave the impression that I had not thought about the obvious limitations of the experiment, convince me that it would be almost impossible ~~xxx~~ to put together a ~~xxxxx~~ reasonably short report that would not be distorted. If this were my own work, I would write it up for the critics, but not ~~xxxxx~~ attempt to get it published. (Partly because it ~~xxx~~ would be distorted and ~~xxxxxxx~~ misused, partly because if I were to try to publish anything it would be some of my work on Oswald and the FBI or the like.) This is, however, mainly Alvarez' work - certainly his idea - and he thinks it should be published. Any article he submits would be in his ~~xxx~~ name alone. Unless his version makes clear the limitations of the work - both in the technical sense, and that it is only one small part of the controversy about the Report - I will strongly urge that it not be submitted for publication. But I do think the critics and other interested parties should know about the work.

If you could dig up the old work on Thompson's error calculations, etc. (which I have heard of but never seen), I would appreciate a copy.

You may want to reread my ~~xxxxx~~ paper to see if I really do present "different" conclusions at different points. For example, on page 24, lines 4-8: read the whole sentence, not just the part after "although." Certainly evidence against an argument ~~xxxxx~~ against the Commission's case "tends to support" its conclusion. What could be weaker than that? The point of my comments on page 23 is that even if the fatal shot came from the rear, not ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ single-assassin theory can be ~~xxxxxx~~ without serious problems. In line 9, page 23, note the two commas which are not there. It was certainly my mistake not to see that this would be misread; I will ~~xxx~~ certainly change it. I guess I'm too used to writing for Physical ~~NAI~~ Review Letters.

I'm sending a copy of ~~xxx~~ this letter to Harold. I hope it will reassure him that I have not sold out to the AEC, or to Alvarez (a completely ridiculous idea, if you know either of us), or, more seriously, that I am ^{not} eager to publish evidence of this nature without consideration of its political effect if it is misused.

Sincerely,

Paul