

Nov 29, 1965

Dear Sylvia,

A considerable portion of my time this weekend has been devoted to wondering what to do about the impending publication in ~~Paris~~ Match (and possible several other magazines) of material that I have sent Buchanan. I am somewhat worried that the articles will contain inaccuracies---and I think he has quite a nerve writing on the subject of the assassination when he doesn't even have a set of the 26 volumes, and is depending so completely on material I have sent him ~~by~~ by letter, and which Maggie brought to Paris. I haven't received a letter from him in two or three weeks, yet I have urgently requested that he permit me to participate in the prepublication planning of the article. I spoke to one attorney and a literary agent (Joesten's) about what to do, and finally settled on the rather conservative approach of sending letters to certain people at Paris Match detailing some of the original discoveries I have made, and especially my analysis of the Mary Moorman photograph, with the puff of smoke. I then pointed out that Mr. Buchanan ~~is not~~ was sent this material by me in a series of letters originating last May 29th. Finally, I asked for a copy of the article. My worries concern not only the factual content of the articles, but also the possibility of legal maneuvers concerning copyright which might prevent me from using my own material at a future date. Finally, of course, there is the matter of giving credit where credit is due. I dropped out of school last term when I discovered this material (I am now back at school of course) and devoted considerable time and money disseminating and documenting material. It will indeed irk me if Mr. Buchanan makes a small fortune selling 5 or 6 magazines a story that is based wholly or in large part on original research I have done. I'm just going to have to wait and see. No one has exclusive rights to these photographs (though I am fortunate to have in my possession the negative that is valuable for producing the Moorman prints). The chief question---ethically and/or legally--- is one of originality.

I received both your letters, and thank you very much for the information re Orth. I will write him as soon as possible and keep you informed of what happens there.

decided

After much soul searching, I would comply with your request re the three letters. They are enclosed. Rather than state formidable absolutes concerning their use, simply use your own judgement. What chiefly worries me is that any of the writers (other than ~~WEL~~) be aware that copies exist, and that he not be aware that they are anywhere but in my possession. Therefore, the chief "don't" is that they are taboo as far as scrapbook material goes; IF Liebler got wind of this, I could lose a valuable contact. If they are handled correctly, I think the collection may grow.

I have your whole set of photographs, which I will send as soon as I'm near a post office. As of now, the set numbers 13, but I'm thinking of copying two more of the pictures, which I have decided will be useful. Let me postpone a financial accounting for a few days, as I'm trying to get the photographer to come down in price, and I want to see what happens. Starting next week, I can make Life magazine covers (Oswald and the rifle) full size, for 35¢ apiece. Furthermore, I have finally gotten from the aerial photographer who took the Newsweek photo glossy prints made from the original negative. They are enroute to me now, and will produce

(including a piece of the airplane!!)

much higher quality copies than the one Vince has (which Maggie brought to New York). Of course, there will be no break in the middle. When they arrive, I'm going to query him about some very limited rights to reproduce.

A very high quality enlargement, similar to the one I gave Vince, and with (or without) many of the witnesses names on the photograph, will cost 4 or 5 dollars. I'll keep you posted on what the result is here, because I know Ray (and possibly Maggie) will want one.

If you want a platt map, we also have those. (I should put out a catalogue!)

Re sensational conversations. In tracking down who was going to publish what in Europe this coming week, I had to make some calls to Dallas. I spoke to Jean Hill, and will tell you about it in my next letter. I must type up my notes on that. I think they are really sensational. Jones Harris, it seems clear, got quite a bit of information out of her that she has told no one else; if what she implies is true, Jones Harris got an eyewitness description without any censorship of what actually went on on the grassy knoll that day. As a result, Mary Moorman and Jean Hill are no longer on speaking terms with each other. I will fill you in on all the details I have on this in my next letter; ~~XXXXXXXX~~ I'm a little bugged that he has never mentioned any of this to me; I'll tell you this, though: Jones Harris is certainly aware of and sitting on some very hot information.

I also spoke to Ed Epstein. I have a whole slew of comments to make on that conversation, and I intend to write them up on a future study break at the library. He has a tremendous capacity for being an apologist for the Commission; he seems to want the recognition of being an important critic of their work, yet somehow say it wasn't their fault. I think he is deceiving himself about the character of some of those men, and his work will be the less hard hitting because of this. I think it was very unwise for him to have spent a weekend (at least) at the Vermont home of WJL. Besides thinking that "The FBI Nobody Knows" is a horrible book, he also made the following statement: "Joseph Ball is ten times the lawyer Mark Lane will ever be". He seems quite impressed with his ~~own~~ theory about where CE 399 came from (fired from the Careano, but with bad ammunition---thats why it hardly entered JFK's back) and ACCEPTS Oswald's guilt. He accepts Oswald's guilt not only for the purposes of argument, but seems actually impressed with the Commission's chain of evidence! He is certainly NOT facing the issue of frame-up AT ALL, though he assures me that one who reads his work ~~will~~ will come away thinking the assassination is the work of more than one man. One comment he made is particularly revealing. Paraphrasing, it goes "Look, Dave,---if all we're dealing with is a bunch of crooks and liars, then the problem isn't even interesting. What makes it interesting if a group of HONEST men set out to find the truth and couldn't because of the Commission's structure and operating procedures. THAT is what is a fascinating problem in political science". From what I have seen so far, Epstein is much more intrigued about finding in every Commission failure an excuse that stems from the structure of their organization chart, than in perceiving the psychological evasions and moral guilt ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ on the part of the various members. A woman in New York is stabbed and no one calls the cops. Kennedy is shot, and the Commission (at least!) sanctions a coverup; then Epstein comes along and refuses to condemn their sanction. I found

I found myself very angry by the time I got off the phone with him. You simply cannot straddle the fence the way he is, and be at peace with yourself. Yet I do realize the sort of pressures he is up against; this week I called WJL just for a minute to set up an appointment, and suddenly he acted as if the missing frames were absolutely nothing to worry about. Yet I didn't let his sudden lighthearted attitude about the whole thing change my views, and I politely but firmly reminded him that I would feel that way when I see the missing frames and where those lines intersect. Now, if I was ~~XXXXX~~ the Epstein I spoke to the other night, I would have said: "Oh, of course, I'm sorry for having implied any wrongdoing".

I'm on really good terms with Willis. He supplied me with information re Paris Match and exact terms of the contract. He keeps bragging to me that he is a "personal friend of LBJ". Put this in your "useless" file: he hunted deer on the LBJ ranch this past weekend.

I'll definitely write again as soon as possible. I also intend to ~~XXXXX~~ you a Xerox'd copy of a letter from (the secretary of) Dorothy Kilgallen, saying that "Miss Kilgallen has asked me to thank you and to say that she would be delighted to receive the pictures concerning the Kennedy assassination." I don't receive many replies like that from American newspaper people, and was very dissappointed when she died only a few short weeks before everything would be in tip-top shape to send her. If you learn of significant details concerning her death, and of any tie-in with the JFK case, certainly send them along.

Sincerely yours,

Dave
David S. Lifton

P.S. Pardon the horrible
reproduction of page 2 of WJL letter.
That is exactly the way mine is.