

January 1, 1968

Dear Sylvia,

As New Year's day rolls by, I want to be sure that I heed one of my New Year's resolutions, which is that I should write and tell you about my impressions of your book.

Accessories After The Fact is the most important piece of integrated and objective scholarship that has been done with the 26 volumes. Most people will probably not realize how much work has gone into this book. It now joins your index as being basic reference material against which any future writing and research will be gauged, and on which they will rely.

I am most impressed by your detailed and explicit listing of the types of sins committed by the authors of the report---of the very specifically named factors that account for the non-correlation between the 26 volumes and the Report. Sometimes, when one gets too investigation-oriented, it is good to be able to open up a book that makes the best case I have seen, in so many areas, that the Commission's report is basically dishonest.

I like the fact that you do not hesitate to broach, when dealing with the evidence, sinister explanations for various fact situations.

New information that most impressed me was that bag being mailed to Oswald. I also like the way you handle the question of the failure to trace ammunition, the ammunition clip problem, and your handling of the interrogation sessions.

You and I apparently share two important beliefs in common. One is that Oswald was innocent of being involved in any shooting of anybody, that he was innocent of any complicity in any conspiracy to kill anybody, and that he was framed. The second is that the above facts are important, so important that I, for one, will not entertain theories and reconstructions of this crime that do violence to the established record of Oswald's beliefs, values, and behavior by casually casting him in the role of "plotter", shooter, or anything else of that sort when the only virtue of such a theory is to use an established piece of politically acceptable mythology in order to make someone's reconstruction fit some partial observation of the facts in some other area.

In this regard, I should say that one of the first things that I noticed about your book was its stunning dedication. No matter how politically significant this plot may turn out to be, I don't think that in terms of human tragedy, there is much that can exceed the personal plight of an innocent man, destined to be framed, and callously murdered, with his only recourse to safety---his self denials---widely laughed at and sneered at because of a credibility structure at that time that gave more weight to the remarks of Henry Wade and Will Fritz, than that of Lee Harvey Oswald, and that a repeat of this performance could be staged the following year, with a blue ribbon panel sanctioning the Wade-Fritz theory.

I have a few criticisms, and I hope you do not consider these picayunish. I am sorry I have to make them, regarding a work that is consistently marked with such objectivity.

1) Six pages of your book, pages 260-266, is devoted to Tippit's movements. Here, in great detail, you present your analysis of the radio logs, and various testimony pertaining to Tippit's movements.

On page 265, you write: "The assurances in the Warren Report that everything was innocent and routine are misleading. The radio log suggests irresistibly that Tippit was on something other than routine business, on his own behalf or under instructions, and that the truth of the circumstances which led him to the quiet street where he was shot to death has either not been ferreted out, or has been carefully concealed."

Crucial information relating to this very specific area was discovered by me in the summer of 1966, communicated to you, followed up by Bill Turner and confirmed, and published in Ramparts (Nov. 1966). It receives no mention in your account.

In the summer of 1966, while at Ramparts, I contacted Al Volkland, a free lance photographer in Dallas. Volkland took the picture of the Kennedy auto speeding down Stemmons Freeway, with Clint Hill that appears in the UPI hardcover "Four Days". Although I called him about this picture, and about the movements of a train prior to the shooting onto the overpass, he provided me with additional information that proved to be most significant. As soon as he finished taking the picture, he headed over the Houston St. Viaduct. In the car with him was his wife. They had to stop at a gas station for fuel. There, at the gas station, pulled over to the side and intently watching the traffic coming towards Oak Cliff, was officer Tippit in his car. Volkland knew Tippit because he is a free lance photographer, and knows many police officers. His wife was with him. He told me that the gas station attendants, etc. would also remember this. About 12:48 (I think---I have a memo on this) Volkland told me how Tippit suddenly tore out of the gas station and raced up Lancaster, XXXX. A few minutes later, of course, occurs the incident of some police car honking ~~there~~ *at the rooming house.*

When Bill Turner visited Dallas, he spoke to Volkland, his wife, and three employees of the gas station (Mullins, Hollingshead, and Lewis) all of whom knew Tippit. All confirmed the story. This information was published in the November, 1966 Ramparts story, and appears in the section under Tippit's death.

(Also, I seem to remember calling you up about this immediately after the Volkland phone call.) Although I know that your book is primarily concerned with a comparison between hearings and exhibits, and the Report, there are numerous occasions where you include informative footnote briefing the reader on more recent developments. XX (Example: page 257, re Nash's research, etc.)

This information was so solid, and so relevant, that I think it deserved AT LEAST this type of treatment in your "Tippit's Movements" section.

2) Ray Marcus discovered the 314/315 frame transposition, as you note, "early in 1965". This information was incorporated into photo panels he made at that time.

In December 1965, I employed the device of writing ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ ~~XX~~ Shaneyfelt, under my girl friend's name and address, an innocent sounding letter of inquiry which elicited Hoover's letter of December 14, 1965, in which he put his foot in his mouth on this matter.

Sent by airmail, the letter took a day or two to reach me.

Almost immediately, under date of Dec. 17, 1965, I wrote you a two page letter completely informing you of what I had just

succeeded in doing. I enclosed a copy of the Hoover letter.

I was sorry to see that when you mentioned this matter on page 22 of your book, you did not see fit to make any mention whatsoever as to my role in obtaining this letter of confirmation, despite the fact that you were the first person I made this information available to, at the time I received the letter back from Hoover. (see my letter to you of Dec. 17, 1965)

3) This last item is more a matter of degree and emphasis.

When I wrote the Case for Three Assassins, I felt that a major contribution the article would make was to put a physicist like Dr. Riddle, on record with an opinion concerning the head shot.

In a court of law, such an opinion would be the evidence which a jury would have to weigh. Diagrams and charts would be just that---diagrammatic aids to understanding. In your section on the Zapruder film, on page 34, you state: "The resultant diagram constitutes conclusive and irrefutable proof that the bullet that sent the president violently backward and to his left was fired in front of and to the right of the car..."

This is not true, and I don't think I am being too technical when I say that the diagram is just another fact. It is the interpretation of this motion, and the principles on which such interpretation is based, that may or may not constitute "proof".

Such an opinion, published in the Ramparts article, is dealt with in the form of a footnote, on page 35. I think this is mistaken emphasis.

Also, the footnote was worded and constructed in such a way as to omit the title of the article in which Riddle's published statement appears. Thus, anyone reading footnote 23, on page 35 of your book, would not realize that the January 1967 issue of Ramparts contains a long, 25 page article, entitled "The Case for Three Assassins" which it does indeed carry. (How would you like: "Bobbs-Merrill, under Lib. of Cong. Cat. Card # 67-25176, published info. on page bag--p.64)

When this same subject is treated again, on page 164, in the context of the autopsy, you do not make any use whatsoever of the intellectual ammunition provided in physicist Riddle's published statement; instead, you state:

"Not only Thomas Stamm (quoted on pages 33-34) but also other researchers who have viewed and analyzed the Zapruder film and its individual frames (including, for example, Vincent Salandria, Gaetano Fonzi, and Ray Marcus) consider----on the basis of mathematically precise measurements of the President's movement to the back and the left in reaction to the impact of the bullet which struck his head in Frame 313----that the Zapruder film proves conclusively that the bullet came from somepoint of the grassy knoll to the President's right, and that the bullet could not possibly have come from the book Depository."

Each of the above three criticisms has to do with an area in which I had either followed up on the work of others (314/315 re Hoover letter; head snap, re publication of Riddle's statement) or had done work of my own (The discovery of Tippit's location).

Therefore, I of course recognize that there is a personal element involved to my reaction. However, I was surprised to find that in no (a single one of the above mentioned areas in your book was any reference made to my work, nor was I given any credit whatsoever.

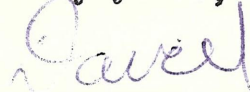
This is in marked contrast to what appears to be your policy of giving recognition and credit to other researchers, in numerous other areas of inquiry, for research made available, or even favors which were of some help.

Although this was a cause of some disappointment when I purchased my copy of your book, I would be setting a bad example of letting personal reactions to a situation (which may very well have alternate and reasonable explanations) becloud my own fundamentally positive and admirable reaction to your published work.

For that reason, I wanted to make sure that you received this personal communication from me.

None of my three criticisms, of course, change in any way the tremendous intellectual achievement that is yours with the publication of *Accessories After the Fact*.

Sincerely yours,



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David S. Lifton