

12 August 1969

Dear David,

I was glad to have your long letter of the 7th, which I read with real interest. I do really appreciate the trouble you took in duplicating the three sets of CDs you sent to me in Boston, all of which I have now read. I was delighted with your news that the Archives have cut the price from 20¢ to 10¢ a page. As a matter of fact, I had gone ahead on 7/31/69 by sending a small order for selected pages from CD 1546, mainly because I was impatient to learn what it had to say about the ammunition clip. The order has now arrived together with a covering letter confirming the cut in price (and stipulating a minimum fee of \$1.00 for mail orders, which you might like to know). Although I am grateful for your offer to check your own collection and Paul Hoch's for any CDs or pages of CDs that I might want, there is really no reason to bother both you and Paul with such tedious chores, now that the 10¢ rate is in effect. I will go ahead with orders to the Archives directly (where I now have a credit of several dollars to use, in any case). I want next to get all the pages of CDs listed in the indices I bought from Paul some months ago after the name "Givens, Charles." I will let you know if there is anything special in any CD excerpts I get directly from the Archives, or send you xerox copies if only a few pages are involved.

I am glad that you got to see the already-legendary Nureyev and Fonteyn. I have seen them a number of times (though not in Giselle—I saw "Marguerite and Armand" which is a ballet version of Camille, and some shorter pas de deux) and have also seen Nureyev in the audience at other performances, and during intermission, just a few feet away from me having a quick one, dressed in a black leather jacket and exuding, unconsciously and un-self-consciously, a tremendous natural magnetism. My first and foremost love, however, remains the NYC Ballet company, since it is the one I know longest and best and which I find, in the last analysis, to have the richest repertoire and array of brilliant exciting artists.

Your account of Fensterwald is helpful. I have still not met him and I have no particular yen to do so or to be in a position where he can give the impression that I am cooperating with his "CIA" (as I learned he has done on at least one occasion). His regard for J. Edgar himself is certainly no recommendation; and nothing irritates me more than bland statements like "He ran down fast" unaccompanied by attempts to overcome the major arguments against such a conclusion, or even by any apparent familiarity with the existence of such arguments as set forth in Accessories, Chapters 3 and 10 in particular. As for his "gunman" in West Virginia: it is probably nothing but the same stale, moss-covered old hypothesis that Jack Lawrence in the Lincoln Mercury auto-demonstration episode (Bogard et al) was somehow serving in a sinister capacity. That was fairly seriously investigated and then discarded, by Tom B. and Lady Jean Campbell, who traveled to Charleston, West Virginia, to dig into things and were satisfied, after spending considerable time checking into Lawrence and talking to him at great length, that he had nothing whatever to do with the assassination.

I agree with you that Schoener tends to hero-worship both Weisberg and Salandria. He contacted me in November 1968 and we had occasional correspondence which lapsed in February. Around Christmas time he was supposed to come a visit me on a Sunday but called that morning from Philadelphia, explaining that he had had a mishap with his car and could not complete the drive. He stayed on the phone for several hours, talking about his various projects and experiences as a WR researcher. Generally speaking, I have mixed feelings about him. He has done some very thorough and professional research in the field (e.g., on Mrs. Hoover, the Pennsylvania woman with the lost piece of paper on which both Oswald's and Ruby's names appeared, etc.); but I would question his judgment in certain respects, both on evidence and on fellow-critics. Be that as it may, I am going to presume to give you unsolicited advice: I strongly urge you not to leave his letter unanswered. I suggest that you send him at least a brief reply, acknowledging any factual errors, and indicating in a friendly manner that you continue to hold the same views basically, etc. etc. (you will know best how to phrase your reply so that it is clear that you are not retreating, but also not pursuing the discussion further—which I think is tactically necessary, lest your silence be misrepresented).

I've just been reading the LOOK article on Garrison by Warren Rogers, which I am sure you have also seen by now. It is mostly a rehash of Epstein's New Yorker article of a year ago but does have some significant new facts about Garrison's ties to Marcello and the Mafia. The faithful undoubtedly will send up the usual anguished and outraged howl that the Establishment will stop at nothing to destroy The Great Man, look at LOOK, and so forth--unless even they have finally gotten bored with this puerile and perpetual evasion.

In the last week or so I have received monographs by Robert Cutler, on the flight of CE 399, and by Don Olson, on an earlier first shot at about Z189 but from a southwest window and a rifleman other than Oswald. The latter is built almost entirely on Lillian Castellano's 1965 work on Shaneyfelt's "incorrect" positioning of Willis and the correlation between his No. 5 slide and the simultaneous Zapruder frame. Late days for that line of approach, I think, but it will do no harm. Olson did not send me his paper, by the way--Wecht sent it to me for comment. He acknowledges help from Marcus, Castellano, Weisberg, and Schoener, which seems to indicate the direction of his sympathies and associations as a researcher and newcomer-critic. Even so, his paper does no harm and may even do some good, in the groves of academiae.

Finally, David, about the pace of your work: I can understand your unwillingness to make predictions, and I do know what is involved in research and writing. It would be presumptuous of me to pressure you, or to place my impatience above your own. Only the author himself can judge whether his work is or is not complete, and only the author can guard against the trap of a prolonged and endless search for completion and perfection which ultimately displaces the purpose and the substance entirely, so that instead of a finite project there is only a way of life.

You did have a spring 1969 target date but now the target seems to be indefinite. May I ask you, without giving rise to misunderstanding or offending you in any way, what still remains to be done? Or, to put it another way, is not your basic case coherent and conclusive already, as you have suggested some time ago in conversation and in letters? And is any considerable further delay really warranted, or a path of least resistance? These have become rhetorical questions, in a way, but questions you should confront and resolve yourself. I know that you feel your responsibility--in terms of the elucidation of the truth about Dallas, and in terms of the historical record--to make your work public, decisively and quickly. If it is really a question of assessing its coherence and impact as it now stands, perhaps an objective opinion from someone else would help you to resolve a final target date.

Forgive me if I have said too much. Had I said nothing, I might not be able to forgive myself for refusing to take a small risk for the sake of an overriding objective--the destruction of a fraud too long on the books already, and the redress of a shameful and conscious injustice to Lee Harvey Oswald. So long as some of us cannot rest or sleep complacently at night, Oswald has the hope of the exoneration due him. But we are his only hope.

Yours affectionately,  
as ever,

P.S. I agree absolutely with every word you said re Ted K. And I have the Harper's on my desk to read as soon as I can clear the mountains of paper which accumulated during the Boston hiatus.