

August 31, 1969

Dear Sylvia,

May I start by thanking you again for sending me the two fbb reports, and your Givens chronology, and by expressing regrets that I am so poorly in control of so many little things, that I did not, as promised, answer your letter "tomorrow evening", as I wrote last week.

The rate at which information of various types has been coming into this apartment, in the last 8 weeks, has been way in excess of my ability to analyze it, let alone even sort it and file it somewhere. The result is that my apartment looks like some sort of Warren Report Critic's Garbage Dump. I have been spending the entire labor weekend trying to unravel things. When I think I'm not working hard enough, I have to listen to one girl I know who has gotten it into her head that the best thing I need is a vacation, and that when I insist on spending time with my files, that means that I don't care for her. I have been having severe "girl-friends who want to get married" problems, complicated by the fact that my 30th birthday is coming up, and two females, each of whom has concluded that they are the only person in my life, have asked me out on the same night---my birthday. I'm too young to die! And it's too late to change my birth certificate. (Perhaps that is the reason for carrying a Hidell draft card??)

Let me first deal with something you raised in your July 12 letter, regarding LHO Mexico, and the \$32 receipt. Before writing the archives, and/or Hoover, I am trying to locate what I am almost certain that I once saw and made notes on---a small news release by the FBI saying that the Laredo story was in error. I'm certain I saw this. When I locate it in the process of sorting and filing my news story notes, I will let you know.

Next: Thankyou much for your advice regarding answering Schoener. I will do it; it's on my list. It will just have to wait a while. After reading your letter, I have changed my mind about not answering.

I have a copy of Olson's monograph, but haven't read it too closely yet. He will be a student at Berkeley this year, I think; this means I almost certainly will be able to speak to him by tie-line phone, if I want, and will probably get to see him since I would like to visit Paul Hoch in San Francisco sometime soon.

Regarding photographs. Besides the nix film analysis, Itek was supposed to have done something on Willis 5, and the Betzner photograph. Jack Clemente, the fellow who did the work on the Bell film out here, sent for it, but was told they were all out. QUESTION: DO YOU HAVE A COPY OF IT, BY ANY CHANCE? It was done on a joint study of BOTH Betzner and Willis 5 to knock down the significance of the black image at the end of the wall. If you have it, could you make me a copy? Or send it out here and I will dupe it and send it back? This is not crucial, but I would like to see it, and none of us out here no where to turn, since Itek turned us down. I understand Ray has a copy, but there is absolutely no relationship of any sort between him and anybody I speak to; times have simply changed, and there's not much that can be done in that regard. (He is still sitting on an excellent copy of the Z film, for example).

Turning to Givens. I think that your ordering pages marked Given s was a very good idea, and thanks very much for sending me the two pages you did. They are very important; I was delighted to get them.

I was also delighted to get the chronology. I am sure I will be able to make use of it. I, at this particular time, am not primed on Givens, or the three negroes in general. Therefore, please excuse the fact that the following comments and remarks are not precise and exact.

I think that the chicanery started when GivensK first changed his story to include the fact that he saw Oswald with a clipboard. The same week he said this for the first time (which is Dec 2-6, 1963, to the SS agents who wrote SS 491), a clipboard mysteriously turns up in the TSBD, and is "found" by Frankie Kaiser. (I do not mean to implicate Kaiser; His find is probably authentic in the sense that he innocently found it; I think, however, that it was planted as a prop to authenticate Givens change of story.)

Thus, if this is true, the first change in Given s story is to see Oswald with a clipboard. (Perhaps he was to include the other changes then too. I know that that is beside the point). I am addressing myself here to the question: when did contrivance re Givens start? I think that the answer is : with the planting of a clipboard and Given s simultaneous change of story on this particular point.

I am , then, implicating the agents who made the TSBD investigation, and turned in SS 491, *(For otherwise we have the amazing "coincidence" of the SS turning up to interview him with the clipboard and associated*

As I said, I am not an expert on the TSBD witnesses right now, although at times in the past, I have spent quite a bit of time on it. Since you are obviously spending time with this material right now, I think it is very important that you have the entire SS 491 to examine, because, for all I know, there are other important subtle changes in Given s story, as well as in others, that may figure in the evolution of testimony of some of these people. *story change occur*

Therefore, I am sending that to you under separate cover. Please let me know if you think that there are other ~~XXXXXX~~ indications ~~XXXXXX~~ of significant changes on reading it.

Next point: when Gemberling wrote that Revill said that Givens might change his story for money, I feel sure that he was reporting what Revill was offering as an explanation for the fact that Waldo reported someone would say they saw the sniper firing from up on the 6th floor. (I realize thats crummy sentence structure). IE. They have a report about a "new witness". Revill's explanation is that someone they already know about will change his story for money. I find it difficult to place upon it the interpretation that Gemberling is communicating to his headquarters, or to the WC, or to anyone else, the idea that Given s would change his testimony for money (hint, hint) etc. Do you really think that is true, or were you joking? How do you feel about my alternate explanation?

None of this, however, detracts from the essential use which can be made of this find. And that is, that Gemberling's report of what Revill said can be used to impeach the validity of Given s changed story. I just disagree with your interpretation on the context within which Revill made that remark.

I am attaching a sheet of paper with what I thought were 2 significant quotes from SS 491. Like I said, there may be much more in that document, from the point of view of one who is a close student of these different witnesses.

Have you considered ordering, as you did for Givens, all documents for the 3 negroes who were presumably at the widows, to see if any information turns up that might seriously alter that state of affairs?

I think we have to be careful about negative evidence ~~cited~~ in the FBI reports (before Given's changed his story). In other words, the fact that Trettis and Robertson, for example, ~~do~~ not include the changed story...In some of those interviews, we have complained many times that the FBI hardly asked for anything of significance. These are just thoughts I have, Sylvia; and I mainly bring this one up because I think that the FBI interviewing of the TSBID witnesses, in the later interviews, was so poor that even if Given's was already primed with his "return for cigarette s" version, it is not necessarily true that they would have turned it up.

Be that as it may, I think that this chronology is of prime importance. In a particular section of my writeup, where I deal with outstanding failures on the part of the WC, I think this story of Given's evolving testimony deserves star billing.

If you change the chronology, or if you turn up anything new in that department, let me know.

(Parenthetical question: have you done the sort of research which would contemplate finding the WC staff memo, or perhaps the Rankin-to-Hoover letter, which asked that Edgardo send out his agents for a reinterview of Givens, in the light of his WC testimony, and which re-interview is the 6 3 64 one mentioned in your chronology?? This would be nice to have, but I don't know that anything but a close examination of the FBI-WC correspondence file and/or the staff memo file (which I hope to order shortly on microfilm) would turn it up. ~~XXXX~~ I'm not sure that the archivist could be trusted to do a thorough search for an item like that.)

Regarding the questions you posed in your letter...Answering the second question first, the basic case is coherent and complete. What still remains to be done? Basically, what remains to be done is the writing of sections of exposition which, for the most part, have already been researched. Regarding the third question, there is no delay in the sense that one has something, but is not satisfied with the way it looks, and so therefore gets involved in unnecessary delays redesigning it. I am simply writing, and writing that must be done is taking longer than was expected. I can well understand how you feel, in asking such questions, for I have had to grapple and come to grips with the problems you mentioned, and this has not been easy. I don't think that there is much of a problem as far as assessing coherence or impact. I am in the position of someone who has a blueprint for a house, and has invested the time and effort acquiring the materials to build almost all of it. The coherence and impact can easily be assessed from the blueprint---there is no problem as far as that is concerned. But the blueprint is not a usable commodity: the house itself must be completed. The actual building of it takes time, and there's not much I can do except to keep working. Best wishes. David David

Excerpts from SS 491

dated 12/7/63; investigation
conducted 12/2- 12/6, 1963

Givens:

On November 22, 1963, Givens, along with other employees working on the sixth floor, was laying the new plywood floor. Givens stated that he saw Oswald on the sixth floor at about 11:45 A.M. on that date, AND THAT OSWALD WAS CARRYING A CLIPBOARD THAT APPEARED TO HAVE SOME ORDERS ON IT. GIVENS FELT THAT OSWALD WAS LOOKING FOR SOME BOOKS TO FILL AN ORDER, WHICH IS HIS JOB, AND DID NOT GIVE THE MATTER FURTHER THOUGHT. (emphasis added)

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Lovelady:

The other employees usually play dominoes during their lunch period after they have eaten, but Oswald never showed any interest in taking part in the games.

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The question raised is whether or not SS 491 is part of the transformation of Givens' story.

Does he mention seeing Oswald with a clipboard at any date earlier than this time?

The clipboard, I believe, was found on Dec 6.

Was it found, or "found", after being appropriately planted as a prop to corroborate Givens' change of story.

It is true* that Givens' story changed still further, but is this not, in fact, the first such change. And as the activities of SS agents Carter, Moore, and Blake, unrelated to this first change in Givens' story, and the clipboard "find"???

Note that these agents conducted their investigation from 12/2 to 12/6, 1963.