

12/20/66

Dear Ray,

(1) The undershirt. The index lists "clothing holes" under "Autopsy and Medical Findings, Kennedy" and you will find in Greer's testimony (2H 125) that he insists that there was no undershirt, and that JFK normally did not wear one. However, I am nagged by a recollection that I read somewhere recently, maybe in Time or Newsweek or something like those two brainwashers, that JFK's undershirt disappeared, as did the bible used in swearing-in LBJ. I can't place it, although for some reason I associate the allegation with Penn Jones. I also seem to remember that one of the scavengers who was "at" me recently (maybe Larry Schiller of Capitol Records) asked me if I knew who took the undershirt and then announced triumphantly that it was Dr. Perry!! I am inclined to believe Greer, who seemed to be an honest witness.

(2) The Nix #5 Man. I didn't mean to sound sceptical, but I am usually unsure of my understanding of photographic evidence--it is just not my forte. I know that you have not yet been wrong on the interpretation of photos, and I certainly accept your evaluation. I haven't heard from Kern; I don't think I should present your material. While I had a very good impression of Kern, it was based on the one day I spent with him and others. I don't know him well enough, nor feel knowledgeable enough about his degree of independence from LIFE, to feel unreserved about submitting anything of basic importance, my own or anyone else's. Please don't misunderstand this--it is not an expression of scepticism or disillusion, but merely the self-evident reserve I would feel about anyone with whom I had had so fragmentary a contact.

(3) The pipeline to WJL. I had reached the conclusion some time ago that when Harris calls, I would say as little as possible--he had shown himself to be officious, indiscreet, and presumptuous. Actually, I mentioned something to him a few weeks ago about my disgust with Lifton, and Harris said openly that he was going to call WJL; and then called me back to relay his conversation with WJL, which confirmed my impression that Lifton was performing the relay function. I think the ultimate fact is that they are both feeding WJL, at times deliberately and at times inadvertently, which is the danger of fraternizing with that type of leper.

(4) Speaking of lepers: I will copy the Kerby correspondence as soon as I get time. It is hardly worth it--he is, as you say, a petty and perverted small potato, intoxicated with his prejudice and stupidity.

Arnoni returned your dismemberment of Jacob Cohen, with a note saying that he was unable to use it and felt that it should appear in the same publication as the article to which it replied.

(5) Whitewash II. I was hoping for a report on your lunch Saturday with Harold. I think he is sore at me for my Studies on the Left review. Have you read his second book? And what do you think of it? It seemed to me that he should have taken some additional time to organize and write it more coherently and to delete some of his grandiose references to his own works.

(6) The Late Jack Ruby. Well, practically. Do you really imagine that anyone will be allowed to see him? I can't believe it. I saw in the press that Dr. John Holbrook, the psychiatrist who screened him before the trial, wanted to get in to see Ruby for (as I recall) "historical and information" reasons; and was barred, in no uncertain terms. If we got permission, he would be sure to be in a coma when we arrived. No, Ray, I am afraid that if Ruby could be allowed to see outsiders, he would not even have whatever he has, "cancer" or fatal anything.

(7) The Mark Lane movie. I am afraid this will make you angry. Last night I went to a benefit performance of R to J, accompanied by Arnoni. It has some good things in it--mostly film clips from 11/22-24/63--but it is very uneven and frankly it is very boring. It runs well over two hours; the camera is frozen most of the time, instead of giving some relief or distraction from the understandably slow-spoken uncomfortable witnesses being interviewed. The film clips of LHO, Wade, Curry, et al, really make you sit up; when the film moves (there is a verb for this which I cannot remember--swoops? horns in?) to Lane at a desk against a background of wall-bookcases, giving an exposition, and then to Lane interviewing Holland or Simmons, etc., there is a terrible inertia and immobility, not always overcome by the internal excitement of the material. I don't know beans about movie-making but it seems to me that they should have been able to make the whole thing more gripping with better use of camera and better editing.

But all that is incidental to the real defect of the film--it is dishonest. Not all of it--not even much of it. But enough to make me very unhappy. For example, Lane uses an interview with Napoleon J. Daniels, in which he practically charges collusion between Vaughn and Ruby. Lane knows very well how many different stories Daniels told at different times. Is he sacrosanct because he is not white? The man is a bloody liar, and there are internal contradictions in his story as told on the film. There was a panel discussion at the end of the film in which Dwight Macdonald seized on the internal contradiction and taxed Lane with it--and his excuse was really very dishonest and unjustifiable. He said that he was aware of the anachronism (I don't think he really was) and had left it in "because that is what the witness said"--with the implication that it was for the audience to judge for itself. But the audience has no way of knowing about the several previous stories by Daniels, and may very well not catch the internal discrepancy in his story. And the film does not warn of either trap, going all-out to create the impression of Vaughn's deliberate culpability.

I have been feeling rather friendly toward Lane recently; we are on pleasant terms, insofar as there has been any contact between us. But I am again dismayed and alarmed by these further manifestations of dishonesty which can be used to discredit all of us. I am afraid you will be offended by my seeming anti-Lane attitude. It isn't really that "anti" but love should not be blind, nor fraternalism, and I think that his good friends should try to influence him, in advance if possible, as I know you have tried to do, to avoid such compromising behavior as the Daniels sequence, the allegations about Trever-Roper and RFK, and the empty threats of a libel suit against WJL.

Ray, I send you my best wishes for the New Year, although we must all have very heavy hearts and grave apprehension, with the further escalation that is taking place and our helplessness to stop it. Things seem to be boiling up to some kind of a climax; and after seeing the Russians bill and coo with the Americans at the General Assembly these last weeks, my blood runs cold. With warm affection,