

4 January 1967

Dear Ray,

Thank you, good friend, for your warm letter and your congratulations, which I value very, very much. I hope that the book will not disappoint you fundamentally--there are certain to be some disappointments, just let them not be too serious, and I will be happy. Bobbs-Merrill likes the title "Accessories..." although I was prepared to accept any better suggestion; and of course there is a subtitle--"The W--C--, Oswald, and the Assassination." If you have any thoughts about the title or subtitle, don't hesitate to let me know--I am open to suggestion.

My congratulations to you, Ray, in return--not pro forma, but with real pleasure that your monograph on 399 will be available, as it richly deserves, for its careful and complete scholarship and its devastating impact on a pillar of the phony "case." The buyer at Brentano's is Lillian Friedman, Vice-President; I tried but failed to discover the name of the buyer at Doubleday's but will write again if further attempts are successful.* Some bookshops in the Village:

Marboro Bookshop 56 West 8th Street NYC NY
National Book Stores 20 Astor Place " "
The Eighth Street Bookshop, Inc. 17 West 8 St.
The Four Continent Book Corp. 156 Fifth Avenue, NYC

*Just got the name: Morris Axelrod. Good-o.

I will look forward to receiving a copy of the published copy of The Eastard Bullet and I only wish that I had the contacts and the time to help launch it here. Rest assured that I will do everything possible if the opportunity presents itself.

Thanks for your clarifying comments on Lane; and the good news of the reinstatement of the cancelled Mort Sahl show, about which I had just heard from Arnoni, with great jubilation on both our parts. That is just wonderful. Thanks also for the xerox copy of the latest cretinal excreta of Kerby--a repulsive idiotic pen-pusher not worth the time it takes to demolish his "arguments" and probably among the sicker of the apologists. Which brings me to the Capital Record on the WR, which I will try to discuss as briefly as possible for reasons which will become apparent.

When the news of Ruby's death came yesterday, I was contacted urgently to be on the Barry Gray radio program that night for 2 hours starting 11 p.m. It was all arranged in such a last-minute hurry that only when I arrived there did I discover (or encounter) the others participating--our Larry Schiller, Wm. Kunstler, and an unknown named Jacob Fuchsberg of the Trial Lawyers' Assn. And discover that we were to discuss not Ruby but the Schiller record. The format was that it was played in its entirety, for the first time publicly, with the panelists free to interrupt at any point, when the record was stopped temporarily, to be resumed after the remarks or exchange of remarks.

As the record unrolled itself, it became obvious and unmistakable that it was a piece of vicious ugly pro-WR propaganda, of the crudest and dirtiest kind. Both Kunstler and I protested, with rising indignation and outrage (but here bear in mind that K. is neither a critic nor apparently committed to or knowledgeable about the critics' case against the WR). The whole first side is given to an "exposition" of the facts, heavily loaded in favor of the official findings. The second side theoretically is 50-50 to the pro- and anti-WR spokesmen. But what it does is (1) to introduce the individual

critics by editorial comments of the most inflammatory insinuations and terms of subtle or not-even-subtle disparagement, planting the seeds of contempt and suspicion about them before they even say a word. Then what they do say, carefully selected from what I am sure from my personal experience was in each case hours of taped interview, is blatantly taken out of context and constitutes not an attack on the WR but an attack on a fellow-critic! In other words, Weisberg was used to attack S. M. Holland, previously identified as Lane's star witness; Epstein was used to ridicule Penn Jones Jr.; and an expression (which I challenged) used to describe disparagingly Shirley Martin was then said to be Lane's verbatim words.

At one point, I said that I would have to go out and buy a new phonograph with a slanting turntable on which to play this unconscionably-slanted record; I challenged its contents as often as I dared, but Barry Gray was working up a hemorrhage of anxiety that the interruptions would leave the record played incompletely at sign-off time, with the Ruby tape coming at the very end, so I had to refrain more often than I actually did break in. Because we had inadequate time to express ourselves on the record as such, we are all to return tonight for one hour, at 11 p.m. --which means that I must hasten with this letter and prepare myself as much as I can. Even though I refused, after 4 hours with Schiller and Lewis, to participate in this record and cancelled the next day's session, they nevertheless included a reference to me as a critic who had "holed up in a Greenwich Village corner for a year" ~~pma~~ poring over the documents (like a kook was the implication) --a really foul gesture, considering the effort and hospitality I had extended to these two dirty propagandists and dishonest opportunists.

I told Schiller to his face when we got off the air that his record was a dirty record and that he was a liar; because he had admitted on the air that it was not an objective "documentary" and claimed that he had never said that it was. That is a lie, because it was his pretence of impartiality and equal fair treatment of both camps that got some of the critics to cooperate and/or participate. Not one of us would knowingly have touched so dirty a project had we known how it was motivated--that is certainly obvious.

He was merely evasive and blustering and could not look me in the face --not from any embarrassment or pangs of conscience, you may be sure. This is a really filthy-hearted bastard, as my instincts told me when I disassociated myself in a 2-page single space letter (which I will take with me to the studio tonight and if possible will read in full on the air).

Please share all this with Maggie, I will try to write again after tonight's broadcast, or I will phone one of you and report. My blood is still boiling about this wholly dishonest and corrupt so-called "documentary."

Forgive me if I overlooked anything in your letter to which I should have responded. All my love and best wishes for #399,

P.S. I had to take the day off from the office today because of the late hours last night and the need to dig into my records for everything related to the Schiller thing; and in the mail this morning received a long, long harangue from Lifton, full of really grotesque charges and denunciations of me and unnamed L.A. researchers whom you will easily identify, calling me among other things a blackmailer, unbelievably vindictive, etc. I think I will just ignore it--I simply don't have time to enter with Lifton into the sick fantasies generated in his unstable mind.