

9 April 1966

Dear Shirley,

Yesterday I finished reading a contemptible piece of garbage, *The Two Assassins* by Hartogs and Lucy Freeman (a girl I knew slightly almost 20 years ago, when she was reporting for the NY Times and used to visit our WHO office to interview my then-boss). The book consists of alternating chapters, one on Oswald and one on Ruby, and then repeat the process. You are of course familiar with Hartogs' disarray as a witness who came into total conflict with his own resurrected records. Never fear: it neither embarrassed nor stopped Hartogs from predicating this dirty little book on his purely fictional finding that Oswald at age 13 was potentially explosive and dangerous. I was so incensed that I spent the whole of today writing a book review, which (if my courage doesn't flag by Monday) I will submit to a couple of magazines for publication. (Maybe I won't, when I re-read what I've written, which I am already sure is inadequate.) At any rate, I postponed the pleasure of opening your letter(s) when they arrived this morning, forcing myself to wait until I had finished with Hartogs. But now I have read them, all nine pages, with one strong emotion chasing and churning with another, and then another.

Before I get into the subjects you covered, I do want to thank you very, very much, Shirley, for the trouble and time you devoted to writing all this out. Don't think that I fail to realize what a sacrifice of energy and hours is required by the mere mechanics, or that I fail to appreciate the confidence you place in me in writing with such candor and self-revelation. I will by all means respect your request that I not reveal that I have heard from you and if asked I will gladly say, as you ask, that you are knocking off the case for a few months.

One of my problems just now is that I am under certain prohibitions from others of our group (none of the people mentioned in your letter) to say nothing about some of their findings, told to me only on the express commitment that I keep my mouth shut for the present. Therefore, this will not be quite the same as the letter I would like to write just now, which might make you feel a lot better about the prospects of an early change in the situation and reopening of the case that has been "closed" by one part of the Establishment after another but just won't stay closed.

I understand your dilemma about Penn--his hospitality vs his unsavory view of events. It is not unusual for a highly-idealistic person, as I sense you must be, to recoil at the full ugliness that life sometimes assumes, even when the agent is a friend and co-worker. From the amplitude of my years, I can only suggest that you should view Penn, or Deidre for that matter (whom I do not know), in their entirety as people, and try not to become too shaken-up by the discordance or disillusion of the moment. I must add immediately that I have seldom been able to take my own advice. Often enough I find myself making intemperate judgments and experiencing exaggerated animus AND letting it be known, so that I have spates of complete silence with some people (until I get over it). I have inherited the imperious bad-temper and tactlessness of my father, instead of the truly sweet (and sad) character of my mother, and realized long ago that there was only a limited possibility of self-improvement.

The world is not made up of Red China and sex, of course not--it is made up of Red China and the Oswald case (Viet Nam being included with China), sex being inherently irrelevant and (after a certain age or a certain stage) utterly boring. Some years ago, I suddenly began to feel that all my curiosity was satisfied--and life has been far less agonizing since my "retirement," or at least the agonies are new and different. I had already heard (in confidence, but you already know who was with you in Dallas) that Mark Lane was there filming people for a documentary on the case, and that Jones was there too, which is a deep dark secret Heaven knows why.

(If I get off the track it is because I have been typing all day to the accompaniment of the Security Council debate on Southern Rhodesia.)

Captain Fritz has no "Parks" in his bureau, but he has a "Potts" or did in 1963, could Potts be the motel caller? Yes, I don't regard the ubiquity of the Dallas Police as mere coincidence—they are definitely interested in your activities, a chilling thought. I am fascinated by your elaboration of the visit to Ruth Paine—my speculations about her should always be understood to be offered on the limited basis of the H & E, and certainly I defer to your closer knowledge of the woman through personal contacts. Either way, she still seems monstrous to me.

The information on Reno's Speedwash is important. I have always suspected that Marina or Ruth P or both made sure that Oswald came out that Thursday night; but I must admit there are some apparent obstacles to that hypothesis. But I feel on firmer ground in refusing to believe, as they both said, that Oswald did not telephone between Monday and his sudden appearance on Thursday night. He was too much the doting father to go without any news of his children, one a very young infant, for three whole days. I don't believe it. I think they were in touch by telephone, and he was possibly lured out there for the very purpose it ultimately served. And your information on the laundry tag is VERY important, buttressing the suspicions which arise from the failure to trace the tag, which is practically a guarantee that they couldn't trace it to Oswald. Here we are in full agreement.

But on Manchester, all I can tell you is that I heard from a very reliable source, who in turn heard it from a very reliable source, that he had had a mental collapse. I have no way to judge the information, one way or another. But his office at the Archives Building was given up, so far as I know, last summer, when he returned to New England to start writing his "authoritative history" of 11/22.

My feelings about Robert Kennedy do not coincide with either your feelings or with those of Lane and Griswold—I guess I fall somewhere between the two schools of opinion. I recognize the enormous change in RFK's position on national and international affairs, and I welcome it without feeling confident that it is permanent or genuine, but not ruling out the possibility that it is both. At the same time, I cannot forget his pro-McCarthy period, nor the truly shocking ugly and illegal means RFK employed in his passion to "get" Hoffa. (Fred Cook or someone like Fred Cook did a well-documented expose of that in THE NATION a couple of years ago, and it left me with a deep distrust of our then-Attorney General.) Where I do agree with you is when you decry Mark Lane's casting the first stone. Shirley, I started out as a vehement partisan of Lane and one of his greatest admirers, which I expressed with cash contributions. I resisted and resisted when small flaws began to appear, and then larger ones, but in the end it took a personal experience to convince me that Lane is a ruthless and unpleasant man. But even so, I insist that he made a genuine contribution early in the case, regardless of what he has done since then. Someone showed me his original manuscript for the book which, in completely overhauled form, is to be published, I hear, this spring (in England). The ms was a very poor job, in my opinion, suffering from many of the same defects as the WR. If it offended me less, it is only because his bias is for Oswald, not against him; but I have to admit that he is more of a charlatan than a serious scholar. Incidentally, you can hear allegations about films recording the secret orgies of prominent personalities about just anyone. I have even heard the same thing about Lane—that he was filmed while engaged in playing Marquis de Sade, or some such excrement—which, even if true, is absolutely irrelevant and his own business.

Yes, Shirley, the tape came back safely and in good condition. I do thank you very much indeed for the care you took, and look forward to your comments in due course.

No, I have not heard anything about J E Hoover and sexual deviation. It wouldn't shock me, if true, but it wouldn't make him one whit less grotesque, dangerous, or evil if it was not true. And the same would go for LBJ--it is not his possible boy-friends that jeopardize the survival of the world and the species, it is his ugly shallow cruel lust for power, and his subhuman instincts, with or without the compulsion of blackmail or coercion of any kind that are the great peril of the hour.

I cannot speak with any real certainty about my feelings toward Oswald--I know only that I predicted (at my most sardonic and bitter) that someone like Oswald would be arrested, as soon as the terrible news came; and two hours later, it turned out to be true. I was xcompletely incredulous from that moment onwards, and everything I have learned since 11/22/63 has only fed my certainty that he was the sacrificial lamb in the set-up. Maybe he was not likeable; not admirable; not empathetic (I do feel that he showed considerable courage, and great honesty, at crucial times in his life, but I may even be left without that comfort at the end, since I am becoming more and more convinced that his image was false, that he was a Government boy)--so I can't say I am compelled forward by passion for justice, in the abstract or the particular, at least not by that alone. I am probably equally eager to prove how right I was, how right I am, and how low the WC and its chairman--anxious to see them collect their due, after the intolerable offense of insulting me intelligence, etc. etc. There is a bit of truth in all of this, but the underlying truth is that I DO feel outraged, that such Nazi and filthy crimes should be committed with immunity, whether the murder of the Birmingham girls, or the Mississippi crimes against humanity and Goodman, Chaney, and Schwerner, or Kennedy, or Diem (whom I hated with all my heart, but whose murder by his "friends" left me filled with disgust), or Oswald--or even the "legal"murder of Ruby which may still take place. These are crimes not only against the victims, but against the humanity which has so short and temuous a history on the earth, in terms of the many millenia of the earth's own life, and which is dangerously nearing the point of disqualification for continued existence--but which may leave the planet uninhabitable for the ants or the dolphins who might otherwise take the place of man.

I do know that I didn't come into the case because of Kennedy. I was only beginning to change my view of him, after June 1963, and I had grave doubts along with the beginnings of hope and trust. I am aware of the enormous dilemma of men in public life--how can they hope to accomplish even a little good if they ruin their own effectiveness by an uncompromising stand on principle--that is why my spirits rise in spite of themselves at the all-too-infrequent inspiration of Fulbright and Morse as they are now (I have disliked them in the past at times, Fulbright for his racial views and Morse when he was a US delegate to the UN).

Proceeding with your letter, I am amused and delighted by your comment that I don't seem as obviously mad as some of the others do--heaven knows how often such a thought has entered my mind from conversation or correspondence with one or another of the "others." Shirley, the same thing happens in any human co-operative endeavor--you question, dislike, mistrust, and even sometimes hate your partners at times. But I am very pleased to be less mad than a hatter, though tinged (I agree, we are all at least tinged).

Shirley, your exceedingly warm and heart-warming invitation to a stranger is like a clarion-call, very tempting indeed. Right now, I have two important assignments ahead of me--first the Social Commission, then the Trusteeship Council. I will not have any free time until the very end of June, when I will begin a four-week vacation. I haven't made any definite plans but I have considered (1) spending a week in the country with my neice and her four children, one a new-born; (2) going back to the Archives to see what is now available. I understand there is a great mass of material and it needs weeks to get through any substantial part of it. I'm told that just the catalogue of what is available costs \$37.00 ! ; (3) flying to Dallas, to look around, see Penn, and also my friend Mari who lives there but is preoccupied with affairs other than the case. I am fearful that any one of those last two possibilities will mean so much labor, strain of travel, talking a blue streak about the case, that it will obviate any vacation in the real sense. I am quite willing to relinquish a vacation as such, but I am a little apprehensive about doing it two years in a row, after the kind of hours I have been keeping for a year and a half. Last summer I spent my whole vacation on the subject index (it was due out three weeks ago but the RR strike delayed transit from the bindery and it still has not arrived in New York--i.e., I haven't even SEEN it!)

Since the appearance of the H & E in November 1964, I have worked every single night and every single weekend--barring maybe three days for unavoidable celebrations such as births or weddings--turning out a 500-page book on the WR as well as the index, and I can't even remember how many auxiliary little chores including some research for other researchers, letters, phone marathons, etc--all this on top of my full-time job at the UN, which at times can be quite demanding.

Frankly, I hope I will be able to FORCE myself to get off the merry-go-round this summer, long enough to avoid the possible consequences of such prolonged uninterrupted work. At the same time, I should really love to see you, and do everything else on the list. Maybe the best thing is to leave it all open until July is closer--because in any case, it may be a different ball-game by then.

Finally, I turn to your addendum. Although Curry denied having facilities to monitor the visitors who saw Oswald, the FBI managed to monitor Ruby's visit from his sister on Sunday the 24th--see CE 2080. I agree with your next two paragraphs (picking up the cartridges; and that Oswald was a patsy, did not kill Tippit, would not have said "poor dumb cop;" etc). You are quite right about the fingerprints, too, and right to suspect the so-called fingerprinting after midnight. Note also that the arraignment at 1.35 am was invisible and inaudible to Hicks, who was at work in the ID bureau at the time and had the impression that he was all alone throughout! What you say about RFK's emissary being en route to Dallas Sunday morning is most suprising and new to me; but I have heard something, somewhere along the line, that seems to dovetail with that. I wish I could remember just what. Fascinating! MUST stop, it is now 13 hours since I sat down at the typewriter this morning, and I am dropping. With love, with thanks, and with much friendship.

Sylvia