

30 July 1966

Dear Shirley,

You must have moved from this address by now but I hope this will reach you just the same--do send your new address. It seems ages since I heard from you and even longer since I had time to sit down and attempt a proper letter. At last word you were reading Inquest and intended to write me after finishing it. I have no doubt that you were disappointed in some respects--as we all were, with the timidity and euphemisms in the book. But some of the critics reacted way out of proportion--for, whatever Epstein chooses to say or not to say, the new evidence he has made public (largely thanks to Liebler, who did not even realize what was contained in some of the documents he made available) speaks for itself in unambiguous tones--it shows the the investigation was a fraud, and the investigators were out to crucify a man who they knew was not guilty alone, and perhaps not guilty at all.

Some of the over-reactors to Inquest are almost certainly suffering from repressed pique, envy, and resentment to be categorized, by implication at least, as demonologists. Others have no personal axe to grind but are shocked to the teeth at Epstein's equivocation. (He admitted to me recently that he can with some justice be criticized for accepting the "hard" evidence as being authentic even though he himself argues that one item of that so-called hard evidence--the autopsy report--has been altered and fabricated. Better late than never, I suppose.)

In any case, the aftermath of publication of his book has kept the pot boiling all the time. Arnoni of TMO (Minority of One), knowing that I had taken a press-clipping service, asked me to keep records for an eventual article on press reactions to the book; also, there was the review to write, over which I really labored (it is so much easier to write an attack, as on Hartogs, than a favorable review!); daily phonecalls from Ed or Viking on strategy; letters that I had to write to editors or other writers; a certain amount of re-writing of my own book, in the light of new findings (not only in Inquest but stuff in the Archives); and heaven knows what else (to say nothing of a big assignment on my paying job).

Last weekend was just M A D. I was invited to Arnoni for the day on Saturday, as the Salandrias were to be there. I was so exhausted that I just couldn't face the trip; Arnoni seemed to sense my state, not telepathy, more likely my increasingly frequent complaints of being pooped, and came to pick me up. It was a stimulating but also tiring 12 hours of talk--also over that weekend we had Epstein on TV, Weisberg on TV on two successive nights, and on a Philadelphia radio station (I found out about it only after it was history) a triangular discussion by Weisberg, Vince, and Curtis Crawford (Vince thought it was the latter's swan song--he is STILL defending the WR, which is nothing less than indecent.) On Sunday came the NY Times story on Richard Goodwin's call for a new look at the WR and if necessary a new investigation--a story that we all agreed was the most important development to date.

Have you read Weisberg's book Whitewash? It has fine analysis and debunking of the so-called evidence...but, lordy, is he a difficult guy! He is damned near paranoid and makes a lousy impression on people who have nothing in common except that he puts their back up. His interest in the case is obsessive--but sad to say, it is almost purely self-serving. He is violent and unreasonable in insisting constantly on credit and priority--acts as if he was and is the only researcher, the lone assassin of the Warren Report, so to speak, denigrates or ignores everyone else's work, accuses them of plagiarism, spreads nasty rumors about sell-outs for cash, and with it all, is so damned "martyred" and "innocent" and self-obsessed all the time that it takes a strong stomach to maintain contact with him.

I haven't been able to beg, borrow or buy a copy of Lane's book, although it is actually bound and ready...his advance brochure disgusted me, in that Lane—knowing that a few of us would know it was a lie but not giving a damn about that—claimed that he was the first to publish the FBI Summary report of 12/9/63, although Salandria WAS first (as we all know) in the April TMO, followed by Epstein, then by Weisberg. So Lane, no. 4 on the totem pole, claims credit! No wonder the WC thought he was one of their greatest assets! Sometimes I wish he was on their side, not ours.

But I did get Sauvage's page proofs to read, and it is a fine book--always bearing in mind that it was written some 18 months ago, apart from an "American Postscript" chapter. It is still a real contribution because he is so devastating in his attack on the old familiar evidence, and does not ever shrink from calling a spade a spade, or a chief justice what he is. To my amazement (I have known Sauvage for over a year but we are still on second-name formal terms, absolutely impersonal), he included at the end of the book an acknowledgment to me that is so terribly generous and over-generous that I suppose everyone will wonder whether I paid him or -aid him, if you will excuse the vulgarity. I was really overcome, in part with sheer embarrassment, since he has always been so iceberg-cold and detached, correct but not cordial.

I am being nagged to do something with my own book, now well over 500 pages. My idea is to let Arnoni publish some excerpts in TMO, and hope that the publishers will come to me instead of vice-versa--the reason being that I am just no press agent for my own work, and I die a thousand deaths at the thought of peddling it around and collecting rejections (it was a year of just that kind of disappointment that may account for Weisberg's sense of persecution). Anyway, part of a very long chapter is to be in the September TMO, dealing with the auto demonstration incident (Bogard). The original idea was to use a whole chapter, "Oswald and the State Department," which I believe is important and in some ways startling. Arnoni thought it was too long and wanted to do it in two parts; I refused, feeling that to split it would have a disastrous effect on its impact. So we compromised on the Bogard sub-chapter. I will be interested to have your opinion, when you have read it.

Are you in touch with Penn Jones? I never hear from him any more at all. Do let me know where you are, what you are doing, how you are feeling, and what you make of all the recent activity and debate on the case. And do forgive me for my long delinquency as a letter-writer: I can only tell you that I have been under such pressure from so many directions that I count myself lucky that I didn't have a complete collapse. I am now on "vacation"--i.e., I am doing only one full-time job instead of three.

My best, as ever,
Affectionately,