

3 April 1978

Dear Howard,

Roffman

I was very glad to hear from you again, after a long hiatus. It gives me a chance to congratulate you on your law degree and to wish you all possible success in your profession—I feel sure that you will make a brilliant career. (One of my correspondents on the case years ago earned his law degree after a very dilatory course of study which stretched out long beyond the usual period; his friends then gave him a shingle to hang outside, "Attorney-At-Last"! This has always amused me.) As you may know, Roger Feinman is now going to law school. I work quite closely with him and have developed great respect and affection for him.

I do appreciate the material you sent me and congratulate you on your incisive critique of Epstein's Appendix A. I had been hearing about his book for several years before it was finally published, much later than had been originally scheduled. In the light of the quality and explosive revelations in INQUEST, I was frankly fearful that LEGEND would present a strong case for LHO's involvement with the KGB—an involvement which I would find it very hard to believe but which I would be forced to consider if conclusive or persuasive evidence was set forth.

I was therefore amazed, when I finally got the book, to see how flimsy, devious, and hollow it was. His case is so weak as to be ludicrous, and his acclaimed "scholarship" is mere posturing and pretense. I read Appendix A first and was outraged beyond words by his inexcusable and false claims about the oak tree. One need only look at CE 900 to see in black and white his flagrant attempt to deceive, for certainly I cannot look upon that as an innocent error. Indeed, the whole of Appendix A is a compound of error and deceit and as such it serves as a warning about the book as a whole.

Two new pieces of "information" in the book did shake me up considerably, at first sight. One was the allegation that Gary Taylor and Jack Bowen had seen Oswald with a rifle (in the text—proper) and/or that Gary Taylor and Alexandra de Mohrenschildt Taylor had seen him with a rifle (in a footnote). In view of the importance of such allegations, Epstein should have quoted each of the three witnesses verbatim on this point. But, whatever they may have said to him, how is it possible to account for the fact that they each withheld that crucial information for some 13 or 14 years? And then revealed it so fortuitously to a writer who stops at nothing to "prove" that Oswald alone was the author of the assassination? No, I cannot accept their supposed revelations at face value.

I was even more disturbed by Epstein's account of an inscribed photo of LHO with the rifle given to De Mohrenschildt. I wondered whether EJE had really seen it, or merely received permission to see it (his careful wording on that score was reminiscent of the Warren Report when it was covering up or misrepresenting a point). I wondered why he had not included the photo and the inscriptions in his photo section—it was after all somewhat more important than the picture of John Wayne with LHO in the background. And I wondered why Marina's inscription had been submitted to handwriting analysis, but not LHO's. I expressed some of these concerns to a correspondent in Europe, who replied by return mail that, notwithstanding my suspicions, such an inscribed photograph did indeed exist and had been published by Oltmans in

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a Dutch-language book. He enclosed xeroxes of two pages from that book, one of which showed the inscriptions on the back. I don't know whether or not you have seen that copy (I sent it to Harold and I hope that he sent you a copy) but if you have seen it, you may agree that the LHO handwriting, while it does resemble his script, should be examined for authenticity. Moreover, I have checked some of his letters and confirmed that he never (in those letters I looked at) used a combination of Arabic and Roman numerals (I did not attempt to examine every possible CE for Oswald's dating practices but did look at a fair sampling).

The furthest thing from my mind had been a reading of MARINA AND LEE by Priscilla Johnson McMillan. But I had to see whether or not the book said anything about the inscribed photo. When I saw PJM's account of the manner in which that inscribed photo surfaced, I was truly amazed. It turned up in a way that clearly suggests fabrication and planting. Marina remembers nothing of having written the inscription. The sketch of the terrier is missing from Oltmans' copy of the inscribed photo. McMillan, who was given a copy of the inscribed photo, does not publish it.

When one views all of these anomalies and discrepancies and omissions in the aggregate, it becomes impossible to dismiss the probability that this "new evidence" is spurious.

I wonder if you are planning to expand your notes on Appendix A into a book-review essay for possible publication in a law journal. Or in a popular periodical. It would be a real service to do so.

Please let me know when you move to Washington what your address and phone number will be. As you may know, I retired from the UN at the end of 1976, took a three-month trip around the world, and have become something of an idler, doing no work apart from scanning the newly-released FBI documents and reading such stomach-turners as LEGEND and MARINA AND LEE. I am going to Israel later this month for a short visit.

Do let us stay in touch. With best personal regards,

Sincerely,