

19 November 1977

Dear Paul,

Thanks for your letter of the 17th with its enclosures. The matter of the FBI 80,000 release has been very much on my mind, partly because I have to decide soon whether or not to go on another world cruise in January (and thus avoid the harsh winter and the danger of bronchial asthma which usually arises) or to stay put and hope that I can get access to the 80,000 pages of documents and spend my time working on them.

ABC/TV sent a camera crew and John Johnson to my apartment last Thursday to interview me for a piece they are doing on the 14th anniversary, to be aired in New York (locally only, so far as I know) on Eyewitness News on the 22nd. The interview seemed to go well, and Johnson asked if he could stay on and talk some more about the case after the crew left. I could tell from his general attitude that ABC/TV or some of its people are really into the case and are thinking of doing their own investigation and/or more documentary programs on the assassination. I sent up a trial balloon, suggesting that if ABC/TV would obtain the 80,000 pages, I would screen them and give them first call on anything of news importance that I might find. They seemed tentatively receptive to the idea but made no commitment.

The next day I got a call from David Williams of the AIB, apparently the result of your suggestion that I would be a key person to screen the FBI release. We talked about various possibilities, including my coming to Washington to do the screening (less than ideal arrangement, as I could work best with all my own research materials on hand and also because it could be quite expensive); microfilming the documents; etc. According to Williams, both the AP and CBS are going to purchase the 80,000; and it is possible that AIB would get access to the AP purchase. We agreed to keep in touch and inform each other of any developments.

I must admit that because of my long period of inactivity I have some diffidence about my ability to pick up from the documents everything that you yourself might find significant. Perhaps for the same reason, your special note on numbering system was not entirely clear to me. My own approach, and this is very tentative, too, would be to classify the documents according to subject or subjects, based perhaps on the classifications in my Subject Index (plus additional headings based on developments of the last several years). But that may not be feasible, especially for omnibus documents covering many different evidentiary areas.

In any case, if I am sure that I can get access to the 80,000 pages either here in New York or in Washington, I would probably forego the world cruise. Let us see what develops. It is going to be a complicated and time-consuming business and at some point I may telephone you to discuss it rather than try to deal with questions that arise by correspondence.

I did not see the Lardner piece in the 11/6/77 Washington Post and would be grateful if you would send me a copy.

We'll be in touch again soon, I am sure. Oh, yes, I forgot to mention that Jones Harris says that the NY Times will get the 80,000 documents pages, and that he would try to see that I get access to them through the NY Times. I put very little stock in that, however, based on similar past offers from Jones which never came to anything.