

9 January 1966

Mr Ian Ballantine
Ballantine Books
101 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York

Dear Mr Ballantine,

About three weeks ago I had the pleasure of hearing a taped rebroadcast of your appearance on the Long John program. I had long been aware of the high standard and independence of your list, and grateful for all the fine science fiction published by Ballantine Books (I am an aficionado), and for "The Un-Americans," by my friend Frank Donner. After hearing the broadcast, I felt encouraged to believe that there was at least one publisher to whom one could go with a controversial manuscript and get every consideration, solely on the basis of its merit.

I have spent the last fifteen months on a critical analysis of the Warren Report and Hearings and Exhibits. The chaotic disorganization of the twenty-six volumes of Hearings and Exhibits led me to compile a comprehensive subject index, which is to be published in about two months by the Scarecrow Press, and which I hope will facilitate the work of scholars and historians in this field of research. My second project, which is now well-advanced, is a comparative study of the assertions and conclusions in the Warren Report, on the one hand, and the relevant data found in the testimony and documents presented in the Hearings and Exhibits. I have completed about 90,000 words of the manuscript, which documents some flagrant misrepresentations, omissions, and contradictions in the Report as revealed in the official transcripts and other records.

A fellow-student of the Warren Report who lives in California has seen a section of my manuscript and has made some very generous comments, as you will see from the enclosed excerpts from a personal letter received some months ago. Even if her remarks were not extravagant, it would still be very difficult to have such a manuscript accepted for publication. There is a definite taboo in this country against questioning the probity of the Warren Commission or the validity of the lone-assassin thesis, except for occasional sceptical articles in off-beat or low circulation magazines. The failure of the American public to exercise independent judgment in the Oswald case, the widespread indifference to the dictates of simple fairness to the accused, and the willingness to be tranquillized by pronouncements of eminent men--however ill-founded--seem to me to be among the most dangerous tendencies in national affairs. I believe that it is urgent to demonstrate forcefully that the Warren Report is a highly questionable if not a spurious document and to compel a reexamination of the assassination.

My manuscript is addressed to the researcher rather than to the general public, in style, and I must admit that it is not easy reading. Perhaps a good editor could make it more attractive. Certainly there is a public for such books, as demonstrated by the success of the Sylvan FOX paperback, "The Unanswered Questions about President Kennedy's Assassination."

Mr Ian Ballantine

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My original intention was to write an exhaustive comparative analysis --a complete inventory of the defects in the Warren Report. Such a manuscript would require at least five years of work and might come to about a million words. Meanwhile, it would become less and less feasible to reinvestigate the assassination. Some dozen persons who were involved in the case, to greater or lesser degree, have died already--several by violence or still-unsolved murder.

It seems to me, therefore, that I should try to publish my manuscript as it now stands, in the hope that it will contribute to a public demand for reinvestigation. If you should be interested in looking at the manuscript, I should feel honored and grateful.

Yours very sincerely,

Sylvia Meagher
302 West 12 Street
New York, N Y 10014

Chelsea 2-4293 or
Plaza 4-1234 ext 2024

(Excerpt from handwritten letter)

Dear Sylvia,

I have just now finished reading this absolutely extraordinary section of your manuscript and I simply couldn't return it to you without telling you how really superb it is. I'm utterly astounded and awe-struck at the manner in which you have managed to pull this staggering octopus together and guide it into one main channel. You have put an enormous amount of confusing, contrasting, and varied material into a cohesive and forceful statement and you've done it in a surprisingly brief time, relatively. I sit here and look about the room which is a maze of scattered bits and pieces, notes, files, papers of every description, and marvel at how you have so systematically organized your material--how expertly you have exercised choice and selectivity and how thoroughly and accurately you've documented every significant statement! You ought to submit it for a PhD! (I suspect you've already earned one!)

My most profound thanks to you for allowing me to see it...Frankly, I had never followed through on the business of the stretcher bullet and you've made a first-rate argument out of a specific and highly important piece of evidence. How did they dare? But when one begins with that question, there is no end to the audacity, is there? I don't know how that particular and mysterious development escaped me as it did--but I suppose that while reading that phase I was too preoccupied with other inconsistencies to be aware of this most glaring one.

Incidentally, I--for one--can't wait until you have completed your truly outstanding document as I hope to be one of the first to purchase one and I know of several people who will want to own it, too...At this point, needless to say, it is naive to be mystified or surprised by anything in the (Warren) Report --but I still find myself gasping with incredulousness every now and then, at the sheer blatancy of the falsifications, misrepresentations, etc.