

December 24, 1985

Professor Philip Melanson
Robert F. Kennedy Assassination Archives
Southeastern Massachusetts University
North Dartmouth, Mass. 02747

Dear Phil,

I will start with a confession: I have not used my typewriter for a long time. The ribbon is worn out (shades of Harold Weisberg) and I have no carbon paper at hand. I will therefore ask you to have a xerox made of this letter and the enclosure and will be grateful if you would send me the xerox copies for my files.

Over the last twenty years I have often been asked to review manuscripts on the JFK assassination, and I have always given a wholly honest and frank evaluation--on two occasions, with the result that I lost completely the friendship of the authors. I am going to be no less candid in this case.

I think that your manuscript on MLK and James Earl Ray is a very valuable contribution to the literature. It is logical, judicious, well-researched and largely persuasive. The strongest elements are your analysis of the Eric S. Galt and the other Canadian aliases; your criticism of Blakey and the HSCA; your many indications that Ray had help, but not from the so-called St. Louis conspirators; and your attack on the ballistics, fingerprint, and related evidence.

It seems to me that the manuscript would benefit from an additional chapter, at or near the end, in which you would summarize briefly all the preceding findings and arguments--a chapter to tie it all together and to lead in to your appeal (which might be strengthened) for a new investigation.

I strongly feel that your manuscript should be published and should come before the public, but, like your agent, I am not sanguine about the prospects of its acceptance by a major book house. It is not "sensational" (as, for example, Tony Summers' book on Marilyn Monroe) but scholarly and serious. I have two thoughts about possible publication: (1) Jason Epstein, editor-in-chief of Random House, was (about ten years ago) interested in the assassinations; he is worth a try. (2) I have a sometime-associate who has good contacts in the publishing world but I would be very hesitant to approach him--he is not always trustworthy, he has an obnoxious personality, and he would probably reject indignantly your thesis of an intelligence-rooted conspiracy. If you like, we can discuss this by phone.

Enclosed are two pages of typographical and other minor corrections. Congratulations on a major and admirable work.

Sincerely yours,

Sylvia Meagher