

8 February 1972

Dear Howard,

Thank you for your letter of the 3rd and the information about the status of your book. I am very glad that you regard Tink Thompson's reader's report^{as} fair and constructive. That was my reaction, as I believe I told you, and I can add that from an evening I spent with Tink recently I found his attitude toward the ms. more than positive. Both you and Tink seem to be fully occupied with academic duties but since you are in such proximity I hope that you will find time to renew acquaintance with each other.

I cannot help but be somewhat disappointed by the rather guarded decision of the U of P Press to consider your book again once it has been revised. While I appreciate Tink's reasoning with respect to the revisions he suggested, I still feel that the power and importance of your book is such as to overshadow any flaws of style or unevenness (e.g., the Arlen Specter chapter, that could and probably should come out). A good publishing house would provide expert editing, in any case, if I am to judge by experience with my own book.

My feeling is that you should not put it aside until you can undertake the revisions next summer, in order then to re-submit it, but that you should meanwhile send the ms. "as is" to another publishing house or two. I would certainly be ready to recommend it highly to Robert Amussen, editor in chief of Bobbs Merrill, and to Aaron Asher, editor in chief of Holt Rinehart Winston.

I took the liberty of sharing your news with Tink and with Cyril Wecht, both of whom are very interested in the fate of your book. Wecht is STILL waiting to receive an answer from Burke Marshall, who seems in mortal fear of letting him see the photos and X-rays yet unable to find any pretext for turning him down. I have a better idea now of why Harold sees such danger in this effort by Wecht and Nichols to see the autopsy materials. Even if there was any merit in his fears as to Ted Kennedy and/or J. Edgar (which seem to me to be outlandish and preposterous), so what? Truth must be told, though the heavens fall, and if we researchers and critics submit to illegitimate restraints--whether they originate with our adversaries or our colleagues--we are in default no less than the Warren Commission.

Until new developments, best personal regards.

Yours sincerely,

2/3/72

Dear Sylvia,

I spoke with the publisher yesterday, and got Tink's "Reader's Report" about my book.

The managing editor told me that the changes suggested by Tink were of such a nature that no one there had the competence to make them, and that he and the Director decided the only thing to do now was to return the whole thing to me to let me make the changes if I want, and then resubmit it as a new book. He said that it would have to be gamble, and in response to a specific question, he said he could not commit himself to a promise to publish. He did say that I would have a very good chance of publication with them if I revised as suggested, that he felt I really had something, but that the book, upon re-submission, would be put "through the mill," i.e., read by many readers and some lawyers prior to final decision.

On the whole, I think Tink's report is quite fair and very constructive. Needless to say, I disagree with him on many points, but from the perspective of a coherent, forceful and marketable book, he has given me a meaningful and helpful formula for revision. The changes are of a nature that I am confident I can make them, probably within one or two months-- which will have to wait until my summer break. The hassle will be getting it typed again, though my mother will do it. As I go over the book, I'll write you in more detail about what I want to omit and revise.

In all, I am very encouraged by Tink's report. I'm sure it must have made a great impression on the publishers, and I do not feel presumptuous in saying he has given my work and analysis as good a review as can be expected, though he has not viewed my presentation and style so highly.

I must sign off in haste. Hope to be in touch with you again soon.

Best wishes,

Howard