

23 March 1972

Dear Howard,

Thank you for your letter of the 19th and copy of your letter to Aaron Asher. I hope that you will receive an encouraging reply. I am not sure that it was wise for you to volunteer to Asher that there are parts of the book that you would now prefer to remove or revise, because his natural reaction may be to say, revise it first and then submit it. But let us hope that his curiosity will lead him to look at the ms. as it now stands.

I am pleased that we are now less far apart on the issue of the "pixrays" (if I may borrow from your abbreviation), even if you remain in agreement with HW's analysis of the possible political consequences. Speaking very dispassionately, rather than in the mood of my earlier letters, I would have to acknowledge that every move ever made by the critics carried the risk of political consequences. Indeed, there is one school of thought that seeks to explain the policy of the Warren Commission in insisting on the lone assassin explanation in the face of massive contrary evidence on the ground that it sought to avert a figurative or literal vendetta against the left/liberal movement, or something along these lines. There is here a fundamental ethical and moral question. Stated simplistically, it is, may the truth ever be subordinated or sacrificed to pragmatic ends, whether problematical or closely predictable? If the answer is "yes", as it appears to be in the case of HW, then what really differentiates us, the critics, from our adversaries, the government, which has made an art of the institutionalization of untruth and non-truth? Does it not bring us to the absurd position where, having started with the high purpose of uncovering the truth about the assassination, we are now exerting our efforts to delay or obstruct that uncovering of the truth?

But these considerations appear to be academic, at this moment, for it is increasingly obvious as March draws to a close without any answer from Burke Marshall to Wecht to the application he made as early as last September that there is little possibility, if any, that Wecht will be allowed to see the pixrays. HW should be happy. As you may know, I no longer hear from Harold at all, to my great relief. He believes that I am "corrupting" you and Jerry Policeff and others, although I have that only by hearsay. I do fear that Harold is not only wrong in his judgment, wrong in his advice, and wrong in his objectives, but that his mental balance is in some question. He certainly disrupts any kind of unity that we few remaining serious critics might achieve, and in his intemperate and unceasing communications with the news media et al presents himself in a manner that can only embarrass and handicap the credibility of the critics as a group.

I am very glad, of course, to know that you are ready to provide Cyril Wecht with your help in the unlikely event that he does get access to the pixrays. Let me know when you hear from Asher. Meanwhile, best regards.

Sincerely,