

Dear Vincent,

Your last letter makes a painful impression. Its angry tone and peremptory instruction to "advise" my response suggest exasperation. If I have disturbed you I am sorry. It was not my intention to cause you distress.

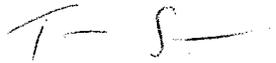
Let me explain. As you say, I initiated our exchanges. I did so, really, in response to ~~xxxx~~ the general invitation made in your Cambridge, Mass. speech last October on the Kennedy Assassination to "join together" to pursue the inquiry into that epochal event. "At issue," you said, "are questions" involving "the whole of humanity." I assumed that included me. And we had collaborated in the past. Besides, you touched on a number of subjects in that speech which have interested me intensely for more than fifty years. So I addressed a series of questions to you about your speech. My only purpose, which I thought was obvious from the content and form of my letter, was to engage you in discussion of a number of ideas in your talk which I thought confusing and misleading.

In the interchange of letters which followed, you suggested instead an examination of my views on the assassination, to which, as I wrote to you, I had no objection but which you did not pursue. You also questioned the sincerity of my motive in proposing discussion with you. And you couched your responses in the boorish terms a petty bureaucrat might use in addressing a critic.

One who appeals, as you did in your speech, in the name of humanity, for a "union of truth" should be more patient and courteous than you were in your letters. In the republic of ideas, where all citizens are equal and worthy of respect, we would do well to follow Hamlet's advice to Polonius: "...use every man after his desert, and who shall 'scape whipping? Use them after your own honour and dignity - the less they deserve the more merit is in your bounty."

Is there any point in continuing our exchanges? I have no wish to provoke you further and waste your time and mine. Or is there a possibility of getting back on the plane of examination of ideas? Can I anticipate your undertaking a defense of your views? Or a reasoned discussion of mine? What are the chances we can advance a little closer toward the goal you set in your speech: "to understand and love ourselves better?"

Regretfully,


March 11, 1972