

October 16, 1975

Dear Sylvia,

Last night's TV spot news report of Senator Schweiker's announcement of the impending "collapse" of the Warren Commission Report and the investigation of three assassination conspiracy possibilities set off alarm bells in my mind and gave me a largely sleepless night. This morning's AP dispatch in the NY Times, adding details to last night's news, increased the warning to a red alert about danger for you, for us, for the cause of truth.

How to evaluate Schweiker's tour de force? He proclaimed the impending "collapse" of the Warren Report. What did he mean? The Report was destroyed long ago; your Accessories After the Fact, published in 1967, made an important contribution to that necessary end. And although president Johnson accepted the Report in 1964, "three presiding judges," ~~was~~ some three years later, "At a preliminary court hearing in the arrest by District Attorney Garrison of an individual charged with conspiracy to assassinate President Kennedy...rejected a motion to admit the Warren Report into evidence on the ground that it was a compound of hearsay and error" (Accessories, p457).

What then does Schweiker, a Johnny-come-lately to the assassination controversy, have in mind? There is, of course, a personal element; he is to be the author of an introduction to the paperback reissue of your book which he has said he esteems highly, and which will appear this winter.

But whatever influence your critical survey of the Report had on Schweiker's thinking, it should be obvious, his intervention was motivated by other considerations. He is, in Aristotle's phrase, a political animal, of the same specie as the Warren Commissioners, accessories after the fact to murder in our view, one of whom travels on the ground in a bullet-proof limousine like a Mafia capo and is head of state in a government whose hierarchs include war criminals and assassins. Most assuredly this cannot be Schweiker's view of the government of which he is a part. His announcement of the impending "collapse" of the Warren Report, therefore, is a bit of personal, political-journalistic demagogy.

What is he after? According to the media he does not avow a belief the assassination was the work of a conspiracy but projects three "possibilities," none of which is original with him: a Moscow or Havana communist conspiracy; an anticommunist Cuban-exile plot; a (presumably domestic) right-wing conspiracy. Considered politically, these possibilities are only two in number: a communist conspiracy with two variants and an anticommunist plot with two variants. Schweiker does not "lean" either way. He enters the arena in the midst of a fierce but muffled intragovernmental struggle involving the power and scope of the CIA and FBI with unavoidable impact on the raging struggles in the Democratic and Republican parties and the forthcoming presidential and related electoral contests. He ~~is~~ intervenes publicly in this struggle when it appears it is reaching a climax and to stand aside may ~~be~~ entail future risks and hazards. The politician's lot, we may paraphrase Gilbert and Sullivan, is not a happy one.

In the American political jungle, as in nature, it is essential always to provide means of escape from every situation. Hence Schwei-

ker's pose of impartiality. He will wait on evidence to be turned up by the investigation he is conducting with a senatorial colleague. The opportunist formula is repetitiously irritating.

There is a second caveat in Schweiker's position. It is unlikely that good Republican establishmentarian, needing to survive the Ford-Rockefeller-Reagan melee which involves, among other "controversial" policies, détente with Cuba, can come down on the side of a domestic right-wing conspiracy. But if political need dictates the production of evidence pointing in that direction which, unlike the Warren Commission, he cannot ignore, the exiled antiCastro Cubans can serve as a target of convenience, as Oswald was fitted into the original plot in order to attribute the assassination to a communist source. Nor should it be overlooked that the latter "finding" is still possible under the ~~under the~~ umbrella of Schweiker's impartiality, again according to political necessity.

Because Schweiker strikes a pose of disinterested impartiality a la that obnoxious busybody, Lowenstein, he says nothing about motive with respect either to a possible communist plot, or in connection with a domestic right-wing conspiracy. Except on the part of anti-Castro Cubans; their reason - anger over diminished support by the Kennedy administration. The emotional Latins! So the truth seeker who suspends judgment before the evidence is in, speculates on conspiratorial possibilities, and pronounces a motive for one which suggests an ethnic stereotype.

The lack of reference by Schweiker to motive, except on the part of antiCastro Cubans as possible plotters, is the more striking when one considers that the immediate motivation for the assassination, documented by Peter Dale Scott and published in 1972 (which I urge you again to read), as reversal of Kennedy's final decision to withdraw from Vietnam, excludes the exile Cubans as the primary source of the conspiracy.

As it does Oswald.

Nothing I have heard or read indicates Schweiker will find Oswald was the preselected victim of a frame up. Nor can he be expected to take that stand. It is unrealistic and dangerously illusory to endow Schweiker with the political capability to say what Senator Robert F. Kennedy could not say and Senator Edward F. Kennedy fears to say. No hierarch in the American capitalist power structure can be counted on to expose the calculated frame up by the government of a powerless, working class, would be revolutionist who proclaimed himself a Marxist. No one expects the Kennedys to expose the frame up of Sacco and Vanzetti by the state of Massachusetts even at this late date.

The "best" Schweiker can do is a finding of conspiracy by, according to political need; either left or right and Oswald's connections there-with ambiguous. For this he can find some basis in Accessories which, in under the heading, Ingredients of Conspiracy, and "In the vein of pure speculation," you adduced "threads connecting persons known and unknown," to spin a "web" you called "hypothesis" and "purely theoretical," of a revenge plot against Kennedy by "Cuban counterrevolutionaries linked to the American ultraright by mutual interests not the least of which was hatred of President Kennedy kept at the boiling point by systematic propaganda from, among others, former American

army officers" (pp384-386). The conspiracy you had in mind, however, was limited to the "possibility of deliberate and informed impersonation" of Oswald who, in "a mere exercise in speculation" was included as a target by "members" of the above "circles" to "revenge themselves not only against the President whom they considered a Communist and a traitor but also against a Marxist and suspected double-agent who had tried to infiltrate the anti-Castro movement" (p386). You did not argue "that such a plot existed," but suggested only that it was the Warren Commission's "job" to "consider and check out all possible theories, however far-out..." (p386).

With respect to the Commission's finding Oswald was the lone presidential assassin, you wrote in your Foreword, "intensive study of the evidence...has convinced me...Lee Harvey Oswald may well have been innocent" (pxxi). "may well have been" is not definitive assertion of belief in Oswald's innocence. Its use testifies to reservation and doubt which, very likely, motivated you, at least in part, to call for a "new investigative body" in your Epilogue to "first attack the evidence against Oswald presented in the Warren Report and the Hearings and Exhibits and present an objective and scientific evaluation of that evidence so that the ambiguity about his role in the assassination will, if possible, be dispelled" (p456). At the end of your critical survey of the "evidence," as at the beginning, doubt.

Useful for Schweiker.

It is heartening, therefore, to recall that in a recent telephone conversation - I think it ~~was~~ was last spring - you expressed the conviction, you "now" believed Oswald was innocent. I recall the pleasure it gave me to hear that. Conceitedly, I hoped the analysis of Oswald's political line in my letter to Florence--- with which you expressed agreement, had contributed to the evolution of your thought.

I wonder, consequently, whether we can agree on a number of propositions with respect to Oswald:

- 1) The young man, Lee Harvey Oswald, who left the U.S. Marine Corps in 1959, lived in the Soviet Union from 1959 to 1962, and returned to the United States in the latter year, was the young man shot to death in Dallas police headquarters on November 24, 1963. He was the first Oswald.
- 2) After his departure for Europe his identity was borrowed and duplicated by an American intelligence agency, probably the CIA, for purposes not yet revealed. This individual was the second Oswald whose role before, during, and following the assassination is yet to be established but whose existence makes necessary re-examination of all evidence relating to "Oswald."
- 3) Discovery of the immediate motivation of the assassination as imperialist military intervention in southeast Asia to stem the extension of the new economic formation or "socialist society" or "communism", taken in conjunction with Oswald's Marxist beliefs and attempts to live in accordance with them, precludes motivation on his part for the assassination of president Kennedy; but also, in combination with his isolation from the American revolutionary movement and his lack of friends and associates

generally made him an ideal patsy for conspirators intending to conceal their purposes and plot by attributing the assassination to a communist source.

4) Oswald killed no one but was framed by Dallas police and FBI as a cop killer and presidential assassin. The Warren Report, constituting the government's official position on the assassination, is a rationalization of the frame up of Oswald and a cover up of the killers and their sponsors; the Commissioners became accessories after the fact to murder of the ~~the~~ thirty third president of the United States; one of them is now president and lives in fear of assassination.

5) Affirmation of Oswald's innocence is the key to exposure of the frame up, and is the point of departure for refutation of the Warren Report. Other approaches are inconclusive, confusing, and diversionary.

Agreement on this schema, with or without modifications, would give me much pleasure and great satisfaction. I could think that the work of twelve years was not totally in vain. But if that is not to be, is there enough correspondence of view for me to suggest, without giving offense, that you take the occasion of the reissue of your book to include in your new foreword not only the most significant new evidence come to light since 1967, but also the movement of your thought from doubt of Oswald's guilt to certainty of his innocence? It would differentiate your position from any position Schweiker might take and might enable you to avoid or mitigate unpleasant criticism when Schweiker's inevitable compromises with or capitulation to government or party necessity, in accordance with the precedent of the Warren Commission, are made to reflect adversely on you by associating you, however unjustly, with him, politically, as a result of the appearance of his foreword in your book. He might damn you with fulsome praise.

But whatever you think of my urging please believe I would spare you the pain that follows betrayal by people we like, admire, respect, of our misjudgment of them. And that I wish you well.

Thomas