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*I'm looking for  
your Park Lane letter  
for mine. Lucky is  
Laird*

Dear Miss Gray:

I had hoped to write to you before now regarding your request for a statement endorsing Six Seconds in Dallas. I was required to leave for Europe before I thought that I might and to stay longer than I had intended. Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding.

In reading the book I was struck by Mr. Thompson's desire to distinguish between his book and other works in the section entitled "Why another book". Surely such an effort is valid so long as the effort to distinguish does not lead one into serious error. Some of these I pointed out to you in New Orleans. I did not mention the most serious one at that time since research and investigation was continuing. I feel free to do so now, not as abstract criticism of the book, but so that you may send this letter to Mr. Thompson for comment and I presume an apology.

On pages 218 and 219 Mr. Thompson deals with Julia Ann Mercer, her observations and that material which I quoted in Rush to Judgment. Almost every allegation that he makes on those two pages is in error. I find it nothing less than astonishing that he relied upon a hearsay report regarding the speculations of a police officer as to what may have transpired in his absence and then concluded that the report "effectively puts to rest any lingering doubts about the pickup truck seen by Julia Ann Mercer." Miss Mercer has been located and questioned recently. She has stated that the man she observed carried a rifle wrapped in brown paper up the knoll. She has stated that the FBI report of the interview with her is error-ridden as is the affidavit of the Dallas Sheriff's Department which she did not sign. The signature at the base of the page is, she states, a forgery. She offers substantial support for her statements. She has also made other statements regarding her observations that are of sufficient weight to place the entire Warren Commission

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investigation in doubt even if there were no other basis for having doubt. I shall be willing to share this additional information with Mr. Thompson in the near future when it is no longer confidential. I imagine that within a week or two it will be possible to send a copy of Miss Mercer's statement to Mr. Thompson.

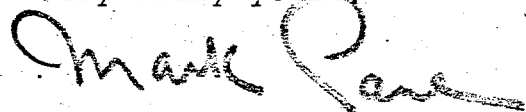
Of course Mr. Thompson could not have known what Miss Mercer told the FBI agents just as he cannot know what the police officers upon whom he has chosen to rely told the FBI agents. It is therefore unfair to criticize him for guessing so inaccurately about the importance of Miss Mercer as a witness. Indeed the near future may reveal her to be one of the most important witnesses in Dealey Plaza. Yet it is fair to criticize him for guessing at all. And it is fair to criticize him for stating that the doubts have been put to rest when the Commission failed to question Miss Mercer, failed to question Officer Murphy about the incident, and failed to question the men with the truck. It is fair to criticize him for matching the Commission's failures with his own insofar as failing to question the relevant witnesses and perhaps for surpassing the Commission's failure regarding the episode by issuing a finding "Did Julia Ann Mercer see a gunman carry a gun case onto the grassy knoll shortly before the assassination?" "Answer: No."

Mr. Thompson's inaccuracies have been adopted by Mr. John Sparrow who utilized the incorrect data from Six Seconds In Dallas to launch an assault upon my work in a massive article published in the Times Literary Supplement.

Anyone may make an error. I see nothing sinister in Mr. Thompson's blunder. It now having been called to his attention, I am certain that he will re-read the material and publicly state that he was in error and that the attack upon Rush to Judgment contained upon the two cited pages was unfounded. I would not expect him to rely upon Miss Mercer's recent statement, which he has not as yet seen, but upon the published material.

Upon receipt of a satisfactory response I will be happy to send to you the statement of which we spoke.

Very truly yours,



MARK LANE