

21 January 1969

Dear Sylvia -

It would be impossible to tell you how much I enjoyed your "anonymous" poem.

Thank you for the correction on "altar" -- that, along with "angle" instead of "angel" -- is one of the words I habitually misspell. I think this is a carry-over from my days of militant atheism when I seem to have nurtured a Freudian grudge, for I then used to constantly fall into spelling "chaplain" as "chaplan," also.

Well, Garrison seems to have pulled a Garrison regarding the Shaw trial. I spoke to Helen on the phone the other night, when it was all happening, and her only concern seemed to be the obviously false report on the autopsy photos -- which I sort of took for granted. As I understand it, Garrison to convict Shaw does not even have to prove that a murder took place -- all he must demonstrate is that Shaw "conspired" with others and that one of these then took concrete action toward pulling off the plot. I may be wrong, but I'm sure this is what I read somewhere. And I therefore find it difficult to believe that autopsy photos or other archive documents could possibly be relevant to Shaw's prosecution or defense. So I conclude Garrison obviously has nothing on Shaw (and Shaw probably by now has a great deal on Garrison and his investigators). So the tables, at least for the moment, are turned -- and yet I am sure, somehow, the Garrisonites will find reason to keep their fires of faith burning. Belief is a terrible thing.

"Jolly, jolly, steeped in folly, tell us, pray  
How many assassins did you catch today?"

"One Great Big One -- that got away."

Returning to your book, on pages 344-5 you bring up the mysterious circumstances surrounding Oswald's re-entry into the U.S. As I've said previously, subjectively I find it hard to accept that Oswald was an agent of some kind, unless he was "self-styled" or a low-level informer for the FBI (who would have probably fed them bum scoop). But I wonder if all this exception making was not for Marina. I seem to recall reading that she had a father or uncle or someone in Soviet intelligence and Oswald did seem under pressure from the FBI to persuade her to defect. He also wrote those blatantly self-defeating lines to the Russian Embassy requesting a visa back to the USSR. Could the FBI or CIA or somebody have been recruiting Marina as a spy for the United States, and could Oswald have been consistently screwing up their attempts while pretending to go along with them? Oswald was a defiant man, and I can picture him telling the authorities he would do something and then turning around and more or less openly doing the opposite.

Regarding Marguerite Oswald's speculation on page 343 that her son had gone to the USSR on a clandestine mission, as I understand it, she thinks nearly everybody is on one kind of "clandestine mission" or another, and I think this was just something she told herself to keep from having to believe her son did not conform to her own values regarding patriotism, etc. Shortly after the assassination, I got a letter from her in response to an article about my having written an unpublished novel on Oswald. In this completely screwball note she asked me for a copy of THE IDLE WARRIORS, saying she had been unable to find it in the bookstores in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, and told me that she had "researched" the subject and decided that Lee did not defect to the Soviet Union at all. What she meant by this last I did not at the time appreciate. I merely assumed that she was deranged by the tragedy of recent weeks. The sentence structure was similar to that of some of the more baffling passages in OSWALD IN NEW ORLEANS. I gave the letter to Clint to answer, as he was then regarding himself as my "literary agent," a position which consisted of wearing a loud checkered coat and smoking cigars and talking out of the corner of one's mouth, and going around to the local radio-TV stations saying things like "this boy is HOT." I later sent him \$50 to dissolve our contract, during a period when he wasn't working and I was.

I wish to emphasize that I do not consider myself an expert on Oswald and it is entirely possible, too, that he WAS a CIA or FBI or some other agent -- but my subjective impression is the opposite, and if I had stuck to my subjective impressions regarding whether or not he had committed the assassination, instead of being taken in by all the "objective evidence," I would never for a minute have accepted the Commission's theory. So from now on I'm expressing my subjective insights, tagged as such, along with conclusions derived from what I'm told by others are the facts, tagged as such. And somebody else can choose between them when they're in conflict.

Well, time for me to go to work. I had hoped to cover more -- but will get back to the job about this time next week.

Again, thank you for the lovely poem. I hope you don't mind if I circulate some copies of this anonymous masterpiece. "...Jolly Green, you would have made a lovely Queen."

Love,

Kerry

