

9/18/70

Dear Paul,

After two weeks of silence, while I know from what you've said that you are busy, I feel that the hazards in your paper are such I can no longer wait for any response you might make. Also, I have no way of knowing whether you understood my ellipsis in a separate letter, written that way on the off chance you might have been under some kind of compulsion.

The hazards are not alone to the truth we seek to establish and from the certainty the dishonest press would misuse this for further corruption of the public mind. The paper is so worked out that honest reporting would and could have no better effect. There is also hazard to you and to your future, for as a friend I repeat what I have earlier said, it is the pseudo-science of the flat-world approach, invalid in every tangible aspect and out of any context. The days of the fairies and needles, I certainly hope, are past.

It is to me tragic that you put so much time and effort, so much of the waste of a fine mind, into what, when it valid, could not possibly be used save for dishonest purposes. Even if everything you suggest and allege were true, and I repeat, this is not the case, the end product is susceptible of no use save as a further false affirmation of the Report. This, I think, you do not want. Nor do I think it was your original concept. What kind of science or scientific pursuit is it that can be used for no purpose than to make black white?

The grim reality is that your work is so removed from the realities, so separated from what is, beyond reasonable doubt, established as fact, that it cannot possibly be taken as other than a work of sympathy by those who do not know you well enough to understand you would not be that way. More, and worse, for a man who plans a career, meaning a lifetime, in science, it is not even acceptable high-school science. While there is much I could add to what I want in haste, I think it now unnecessary. I address you bluntly not to insult you but because friendship demands candor and the kind of pep Bob Smith sent you, designed not to give you offense, could not but have deceived you about his true feelings. If this thing ever gets printed you will have defamed yourself as nobody could, and it is inevitable that you will make yourself the target of those who would prefer anything else. Their own integrity, to say nothing of their great and costly efforts, make anything else impossible. But my central point, if one without credentials may offer an opinion, is that that you call science is hogwash. I do hope that by now you see and understand this.

All of this troubles me greatly, especially, in addition to those things on which I've already commented, because of its timing. It cannot but buttress the government when it will again be in court, in my suits for the suppressed material and in the Bay case, where the prospects of getting a full court hearing are much brighter than the press has indicated if, indeed, understood. Certain things are obvious from this. One that may not be is the inner hurt you may later feel if you do impede these things in any way, regardless of motive. You have, alas, put yourself in a position so comparable to that of some of the Commission staff, where we now find any decent motive they may have felt utterly irrelevant.

I ramble because I have been worried to the point where this intrudes when I try and think of other things. My reason for the ellipsis is that I considered it possible that Alvarez might be forcing you to do what you might otherwise not want to do. I found this inconsistent with your earlier references, which I took to be genuine, but I simply could not conceive you could possibly do such really

bad work. (This is more a compliment than an insult, if you but think.) The more I got into it, the less likely it seemed that this could be anyone and the more I found myself seeking credible explanations. Then I found what I considered could be class. One was that bit about the fifth floor. You just never make that kind of simple error that others, including me, do make. I can't recall a single case in our long correspondence or any of your memos. And no mention of the slight blood-cast to the poor Tague? Of course, the Commission having obtained the truth, we can forget Aldredge, but Tague they sanctified. And do you for a moment think I could believe you would call a study the exhalation of exhalation separated from inhalation?

Besides, have we been permitted enough knowledge for any real study of the character you undertook? Is this not one of the areas in which we have been denied most of the information? (And wasn't the Commission also?) Do any of us know enough to invoke "science" for such purposes? I think not, and in this area my work has been more extensive than yours.

The thing that so distresses me is the total departure from your normal method, your considerable conservatism. Example: pure propaganda to call that motion a "head snap". If you believe it you have never understood any of the film, including Spruder. But in the available Nix and Macmore, it is also without reasonable questioning that the entire body goes backward, quite violently, not just the head that "snaps". I don't know who coined this one, but I plead innocence. If you did not see the entire part of the body that could move go backward, you didn't see Spruder.

But I digress. Then there was that bit about the still-invalid comparison with the gelatin, ignored in your conclusions, that disproves them.

Paul, can you understand I could not conceive of your calling a valid experiment one in which you do not identify the kind, condition of ripeness, size, cohesiveness and other characteristics, like skin character, of the melon used? Or used a .30-06 instead of a 8.5, and failed to identify the load, composition and design characteristics of the ammo? Its velocity, whether or not designed to mushroom or fragment (as almost all hunting and varminting loads are). Or saying that it was "reloaded" with what? For what purpose? Do you know what ammo was used in the assassination? Or do you consider it a scientific validity to assume a military-type was used?

I could go on and on. None of this seemed or still seems at all like you and the use of science I'd expect you above all to make. So, I began to bell eye, perhaps thinking wishfully, that this was not really you. Then the ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ obvious error could make sense, as a clever device by you to get some of us, like Sylvia and me, to tear this thing apart. This could explain fifth floor, ignoring the gelatin test, the wrong angles, the missing angles, the unwarranted assumptions, the wrong rifle and ammo, the inconsistent comparisons and other things.

Feeling that if one I considered so close to incorruptible could be prevailed upon to lend himself to something like this, the most compelling pressures had to be used, I also felt it necessary to write you with some circumspection, for I wanted no harm to befall you should there be surveillance.

This is painful and there are other things I must do. Please accept the opinion of an older man who has had more experience with life. Neither your reputation (among your friends or in your field) nor your self-respect will survive publication of this paper in any form. You will come to hate yourself for it and find it impossible to excuse, even to yourself, its inevitable harm.... And for your sake, if not for Christ's, if that "science" bug bites you again, eat the hell out of any woman in which you deal with innocent victims.