

1/3/70

Dear Sylvia,

If Paul has not sent you a copy of his roundbobbin mailing, as I presume he did, and if the Archives did not send you a copy of the list of what was declassified in the 1970 review, it is available. It consists of nothing but numbers and is, in itself, largely meaningless. I plan to make an inventory as soon and as rapidly as I can.

In what I hope was no more than exuberance and a genuine desire to help people, Paul may have done what I regard as the wrong thing. The one thing for which there was no apparent need is rush. And there are too many strange circumstances surrounding the entire business. If I can't pretend to understand all of it, and there really is no way I can, it is obvious from what was sent me (the small proportion of what I've been pushing for for so long -and apparently exactly the same thing and only the same thing was sent Paul, of all the things he's sought) that there are inherent and serious dangers and a prima facie case that the government is anxious for the Garrisons, Spragues, Skolnicks, Newcombs and the like to misuse it.

It falls into two broad categories: what should never have been ~~xxxxxx~~ released to begin with and what should never have been withheld to begin with. The former is clearly covered by both the Guidelines and the law, and should be. It is extremely personal, fits the definitions of medical records and personal privacy as completely as possible, and is defamatory. It is also close to meaningless, unless one wants to torture mental sickness and homosexuality. There is genuine worth to the second category (Paul appears to have missed it in what he wrote me), and its premature use would forestall any prospect of carrying it further, getting more of the truth. I think I can. I think this stuff was released because they knew I am going to sue for it and much more like it. I have exhausted all my administrative remedies, made clear that I already had some of it (by accident, but I did), and with the competence of the espionage, clearly reflected in every aspect of my suit for the Ray material, there is every reason to believe they knew I had the Complaint in rough draft.

From this minor part of what was withheld, I have been able to solve two of the major New Orleans mysteries, but solving them is not enough, for what must be extracted is the meaning, if any, the significance in the assassination, not personal lives and fears. Here is one of the areas of great hazard. So, I can only hope that what may be a trap is not tripped by the least informed and the most irresponsible among us (and those who are not "us"). If it happens, there will be a first-class, prefabricated defense in all legal actions to get this stuff, pending and planned and future, a solid basis for not making any further declassifications, and the thorough obfuscation of what may now be accessible.

If my opinion means anything to you, if you get any of this new stuff, please be more careful than you ordinarily would in redistributing it. Some premature uses, where nothing was accomplished by the use, has already killed prospects of further inquiry along those lines. A story here and a story there today means nothing. Few if any are doing any real research, and genuine inquiring, and the satisfaction of ego or natural yearning to inform people, no matter how few at a time, can, in the long run, serve no constructive purpose. It is my belief that the only purposes served will be counterproductive. I've never been able to disclose it to you for various reasons, one being your reluctance to maintain confidence, another your failure to get here, but in the New Orleans area, my personal investigations, completely divorced from Garrison's, have been very productive, are confirmed, not advanced by this new material, and still hold good prospect of major success, if not stopped dead, as can now happen. I'll keep you posted as best I can. Have a good year,

Harold