

1/21/71

Dear Sylvia,

One of the things I believe I never had a chance to tell you about is my contact with Senator Russell. I promised in advance that it would be confidential and whether or not I mentioned it earlier, I would prefer that it remain that way, at least for a while, for after a decent period I will again be in touch with someone in his office. I have no reason to believe it will accomplish anything, tho.

I'm too tired to be sharp, and weary enough not to bend to the files needlessly. I began work at 5 a.m. today. I know it was in June and where I was when my wife phoned me to tell me his office had phoned in response to my letter, really what I had in it. I was at the American Booksellers' Association convention.

I went there with copies of what I thought would interest him. It did, but there lingered a doubt, and he asked me if it could be eliminated. I was able to. The documentation satisfied him. He soon broke a lifelong friendship with Johnson. Perhaps you have since then detected somewhat of a change in what he had to say and that he said it publicly.

The two things that come to mind (he told me no secrets, in the data sense) as of most interest are his belief about why Johnson appointed him (the story about his refusing, thinking his refusal had been accepted and being stunned when he found it announced is correct). He actually thought it was to eliminate him from the civil-rights fight. This is hardly the picture of the real savvy pol of the media, but it is, I am satisfied, what he really believed. The other is about Oswald. His approximate words were "I am satisfied they never told us the whole truth about him." He did not expand. I have my own belief about what he meant.

But what a picture of the derring-do investigators! ?? And this the allegedly most tough-minded of them!

I had intended returning to him, knowing this seemed to be one of the areas of his greater interest, just before he was hospitalized. One or two earlier occasions when I had gotten what I thought would interest him either he wasn't well or I didn't want to take time then. Once he didn't. At about the time he was hospitalized I learned (but can't confirm) something important in that area. It will have to await our meeting.

Teddy K, though his legislative or executive assistant named Burke, gave me the honorable men jazz. I've been intending to write him again for about six months. After today's development I think I'd best let that wait a few minutes more. Matter of fact, I'd intended writing Burke each morning for about five, but got into more pressing things and never got around to it. As I believe I told you, I am satisfied that Justice has framed a case to make it look like the real cause of the suppressions are the family and the Secret Service. Something I was able to do forced a change on their part, and they've gotten their pound of flesh. "Change" doesn't mean it is over. It means that the immediate move was frustrated, no more. It is what I'm working on right now, and they made it so complicated, so detailed, so much work that Bud told me yesterday that were he handling it for a client, he'd recommend abandoning the case. But, I'm well into the requisite research and it seems to stack up well, a bit better than I'd expected. Regardless of the ultimate outcome, it will make a befitting record that will be a good touchstone. There was nothing too dishonest, nothing too dirty, extending even to misquotation of both law and regulations (this part I've already checked).

Johnson knew what he was doing, anyway. He was the real pol, not Russell.

Sincerely,

