

7/6/72

Dear Sylvia,

About a week ago Jim Lesar told me he had heard you are sick. I am, of course sorry, sorrier that you confirm it in your letter of the 4th which came today.

I do not get up between 3-4 in the mornings as I used to except when I am writing, but I am probably still the earliest riser among the critics and I am wearing out and stay weary. Today, almost two months after it was supposed to happen, Jim Lesar came up to listen to tapes of interviews I conducted, including inside two jails and in them or five witnesses, to be used as part of the basis for a habeas corpus proceeding on behalf of Ray, which in my view is in behalf of both truth and its establishment. And more I will not go into, but it is not simply a defense of Ray. Thus it was half past three before I could even go out for the mail. Aside from yours and business mail, there are six long ones to answer. I feel you are entitled to speedy response, so I respond to you first. I fear that if I were to try and address all of it, it would take a book and you would remain unpersuaded. I have read your letters and the others and will begin an answer to yours without rereading it on the assumption that you are serious in saying we should understand each other. This means each others failings and errors, and I freely admit we are none immune, including me. I also feel you should examine your formulations more carefully, for I feel they reflect the subconscious in you.

I know you have had a strange attitude toward our situation, one of disbelief, which casts me in an inexplicable role, and I really think it is some kind of defense mechanism within you, not that there is anything unreasonable about anything I have said of our situation, certainly not that there is anything false in it. I say "our", but I also have to consider the eventuality that something happens to me and where that leaves my wife. Shortly after we began to have the military helicopters and sonic booms inflicted on us, she developed health problems not one of which seems to be physical in origin except a hiatal hernia. She also stays exhausted, more so than I. I work when exhausted. She can't. The emotional consequences of these damages have been serious. She got as conditioned to them as Pavlov's dogs. I consulted a psychiatrist and he told me that only if one does not react to such stimuli is one mentally ill, that reaction, painful and disagreeable as it is, is mentally healthful. He prescribed a tranquilizer. When that made no substantial difference I went back to see him, this time with her. After repeating the same opinion, he added advice, that I move my wife from the place we owned outright to remove her, physically, from the associations. I am sure I told you this long ago. At that time I could not. Now this part I must ask you to keep confidential, for it has been in the hands of a negligent lawyer (no, I do not say one who "betrayed", a fixation you seem to have developed). If I had the means of getting another, I would. I had to make a 50% deal to get him! WHITE-WASH did much better in the Dell edition than they have admitted or accounted for. They were hot for the second book. Whereas they had rejected WW thrice in ms, they had rejected it but once. But by this time it was clear that they were not living up to their agreement, so I kept saying "no". Had I not done exactly this with WW, when, figurately, we were starving, they'd have screwed me 40% worse. Finally Don Fine, then editorial vice president, got hold of the man then my agent and said, approximately, "Look, we have already sold 435,000 copies of WW, we gotta have this." Now, this told me that they owed me the royalties for 335,000 copies as of the late winter of 1966-7, probably January or February. The man who had been my agent left the country for a year, wanted his ten percent, and Dell had come it with \$10,000, which I used to pay the printer. When they came to a \$15,000 advance on the second book, I agreed. I then started looking for the home to which I could move my wife, who now can tolerate noise so little she hates to drive even to Washington, and when she does in warm weather, I have to remember constantly to roll windows up while driving to diminish the noise to the degree possible. I went to my bank, told them I had over \$30,000 coming in September, and asked them to lend me the money to pay for this house in which we live until then. I used the \$15,000 as the initial cash payment and I got the rest from the bank. Fortunately, the v.p. was more business wise than I, so he said lets make it for two years, renewable, because you can't know what can happen. Well, Dell cheated so badly that I even have copies of editions they have yet to acknowledge printing. I got no more from them. They accounted, in the spurious Bringuier suit, which also cost \$5,000 to get thrown out of court, for twice what they admit selling. But access to the courts is meaningful for those of means only. So, we live as we do not from choice but from a combination of medical need and crookedness.

If Dell had been honest, we'd not have the constant worry of the house costs and, in fact, would have the rest of our lives with housing costs only taxes, insurance and repairs and maintainance. As it is we have to scrounge around a get \$400 each quarter plus a \$1,000 payment on principal of each year, a not inconsiderable feat for those with no income except the slight sum my wife makes the first quarter as a tax consultant. We have what is urgent for my wife, quiet (and it is good for me if not urgent), and the cost is less than that of an apartment of comparable size. There is a medical value to our location no money can buy. But this property remains heavily mortgaged, and when I have not been able to make payments, the bank has been kind.

This is only part of the crookedness we have suffered. If you are interested, you can go over our books and see how much what wholesalers owe us, truckers, and bookstores. The cost of collecting in each case, with diversity of citizenship, is as great or greater than we can recover. Those who owe us know this. One trucker's lawyer told a lawyer friend who was handling the case exactly this, and my lawyer said he is exactly right. Where I could act as my own lawyer, meaning where I could go without great cost and stay with relatives, I have collected.

So, whether you think my wife should have reacted as she did, whether you think the doctor's advice was good or not, whether you think I should have rented (had I, we'd have been evicted before this), and whatever you do not believe, this is the reality that underlies all our lives, decisions and attitudes. I would not be truthful if I did not say that it inevitably conditions our attitudes and reactions.

Unless I have been lied to or people made honest mistakes and misquoted you, I have had several reflections of disbelief and snide comments from you relating to our financial condition. Our property at Hyattstown, our sole unattached asset, is potentially quite valuable. It is cloverleaf property, if that means anything to you, or can be sold, under the right conditions, for more than the value of land for houses. You may or may not realize it or agree, but I am as close to unemployable in this area as anyone can be. Now, after my assassination work. So this property is our only 'minus' blanket. I can sell it at less than its real value or wait and hope. My wife, should anything happen to me, can always dump it. But if not to myself, I surely owe it to her to hold out for its real value. What will she live on if I do not? You don't know her, what she has lived through simply by being married to me, or that isn't physically up to full-time daily work. She spent most of today in bed, for example, sometimes has an impaired sense of balance, falls without apparent cause, as Howard witnessed, and after she got off crutches, she was then on a cane for ten weeks. These are realities, and only some of them.

So, in your own interest, I think you should suspend the kind of stuff that has come back to me, as I think you should be asking yourself why you would say such things with no knowledge at all. I am aware that you may have been misrepresented, but I tell you frankly I do not believe so. I have been silent on this for some time, but it is not because I was not aware of it.

Now before going over your letter to see which paragraphs I'll now take the time to answer, I remember that propaganda about "betrayal", your word. I accused a couple of betrayal of trust, not of me, and the difference ought be clear, as again you should be asking yourself why you formulated it this way. Unless I am seriously wrong in my recollections, I'll select just a few of those you have named to ask how I could have alleged "betrayal" to Forman, Mary and Maggie. I could argue others, but I won't. Certainly this is not in the letter, not even by torturing, that you say you respond to. And if you could have gotten the letters I know Lifton sent about me, how dare you even mention his name in response to the worst things I could have charged to anyone? Might I now ask you how you could receive such letters in silence. You agree that we should take stock. Take stock on this. Gary, ultimately, accepted Lifton's challenge to confront me, made in one of his more insane and overconfident moments, and I took a long time off and sent Gary copies from my files that absolutely refute all the vilification but one and enough on that one to make the charge unworthy of belief. But Lifton sent this same crap to many of those supposed to be my friends, who were silent friends, is friends under such circumstances they may be called. Ask yourself to consider this one thing from my point of view. Remember, Lifton is one of those about whom you didn't want to talk, too. (And I do not press you, but I note you are without response to the specifics of my letter. I didn't write just generalities.) Dare you include Ned in this list and say you are being honest with yourself from what I know you know only? Howard was here not long ago. As always, he looks through what he wants without supervision or questioning. He at one point made a comment that he had looked through the

earlier part and finds it much worse than he thought. I have no objection to your asking him about it, but the part you know of the correspondence between useless Ned lied in noting that he sent you copies should, in my view, prompt you to question yourself on what you say. And I know Ned has been in touch with you since - and you have been silent. You heard what he said in confidence you must respect? From my point of view compare this with your absolute refusal to listen to what I told you was in your interest that had to be confidential.

If I will not address all your accusations and I think unwarranted representations, I think here you have a fair sample. If I am not mistaken, I close my letter asking you to think this through. Your letter has no reflection of having done this.

Now I skim. You refer to expressed loyalty, in words. I think acts a better measure.

"Why, then, have we not been closer colleagues and closer personal friends?" This is a strange question for you to ask when the first time we spoke, wasn't it in late 1965? For the first of many times I invited you here, long before any of the things that exist in your mind and you express elsewhere could have had even irrational basis. But let me give you a few very personal other examples, aside from your refusal to permit it. Remember the Arnoni business in the late Spring of 1966? And the Salandria infamy of the same time? Go over your refusal to become involved, to even read their infamies.

You need not answer this, and on the occasions I have raised it before, including in my last letter, you have been silent. On xxi you say what you know and knew was false and I think you should ask yourself why: "In June 1966 publication of Edward Jay Epstein's book, Inquest, sparked a long overdue national debate on the Warren Commission, Inquest was followed almost immediately by the private editions of Whitewash by Harold Weisberg..."

You, personally, knew when you wrote this that the first private edition was on August 1965 and that the book was completed in mid-February of that year; and that the next edition was out May 9. I called this to your attention in the summer of 1967 when we had lunch at the UN and you got quite upset and refused to correct the error. Your book was then in rproof and you were still correcting it. Now forgetting what really caused the "spark" and your changing all the references to WW in your work to the Dell edition, I think it is time for you to tell yourself, not me, why you wrote what you knew was false and why you refused to correct it and got so angry at the mere suggestion. And ask yourself if this was a basis of my trusting you, of how you'd feel in my position. Yet as you know, at the 1967 ABA meeting I went to Bobbs-Merrill's p.r. people and to Random House's and offered to promote the work they were scheduled to print, yours and Maggies, promising to make no mention or promotion of my own and specifying that you were both pretty well nailed down and wouldn't be able to.

Remember that you chided me for what those bastard scavengers wrote when it needed much less brilliance than your to see immediately that it was a complete and total impossibility for me to have said that a year before your book was out, about. You had to know better, had to know it was impossible for me to have said that, yet you wanted to believe it. I think you should ask yourself why. I could carry this on at some length but I won't. But if you want more examples, ask.

When you attribute your refusal to ever come here to "you take offense where I mean no offense", restrict yourself to this and whether or not I have really taken offense as you seem to think I spend all my time doing, ask you if this catalogue, beginning with Arnoni and Salandria, is not enough to warrant it? Yet that never stopped my offers to you. Am I less that "detached and objective" with this attitude, or in encouraging Howard and Jerry to associate with you (except when I warned Jerry not to bother you because you were too busy and not well)? Between us, on this record and your refusal to hear what I kept telling you you should, which of us has any right to say this? Don't take time to tell me, ask yourself. It is not that I will not hear and will not respond, it is that I don't want you to burden yourself and, frankly, I think the question rhetorical. I think you have talked yourself into this and want to believe it. There were not that many disputes between us. And you never would listen to anything on the big one, Garrison, so you don't know anything about it except another invention you have spread around. I had seen him but once in the summer of 1967, but later I wanted to talk to you in confidence and you wouldn't. I ask, as I think you should ask yourself, why the closed mind? You can still learn about this and if it still interests you, what I tried so hard to protect you against with Thornley but must, as will become apparent, be confidential.

Different people always see at least some things "in a completely different way". Did

this discourage you with Epstein, with whom you maintained a relationship and a defensive one long after you knew better and saw things so differently? I was there on one occasion when I heard your end of the conversation. Does one have to do more than read Inquest to ask you this question? Does he not assume Oswald's guilt and never in any way address or question it or the Commission's assumption of it? Why did this not bar you with Epstein and get when we never had such basic disagreements, you not give me what I regard as a convenient contrivance, these differences between us.

Your paragraph on maintaining confidence is quite contradictory to your record with others. I have cited Forman in a way to which I do not expect you to respond and I add Epstein and Ned. How is it right in one set of cases and wrong in others? But there is quite obviously something you and others had to gain by knowing the result of my work, and that is knowledge and understanding. Do these things mean nothing to you? I suggest you have not told yourself or me the real reason.

I will not address your charge of my withholding of what I got in detail because it is not your real thought. Instead I ask you whether, when it was possible for others without suffering to make it possible for all of this to be available and more, in a context that includes much you didn't understand or haven't seen, who is, ultimately, responsible for them not being generally available? Forget about this being literary material and consider it another kind of property and ask yourself how reasonable what you say is.

Secrecy, rubbish, and you damned well know it. You persist in living a fiction in person and persist that others house themselves in your dream world. Was it "secrecy" when I gave Cyril what it is oncredible to me he didn't see when I sent him the panel report? Well, the press was there, wasn't it? Now tell me about all the big, black headlines from that total destruction of both the Commission and the panel and everyone connected with it. More than just what you described my preceding writing that he used, as tour de force. Here it was tested in court, and almost total silence. I gave Garrison all his medical evidence. Despite the limitations of the lawyers, it makes an incredible record. The press was there as there has never been a press on anything before, all the big papers, the electronic media, and not putka juniors, their top people. Got a few nice examples of these black headlines from your files for me to show me the great benefit you not suddenly thing all the whores in the press will fall all over themselves to give me or us? When will you come face to face with the reality? Couldn't you learn from your own Belin experience? (And ask Howard if when he consulted me about his writing Belin I didn't warn him the whole thing would be at best counterproductive, this long before printing?)

Under the best of circumstances, this is a very rough deal. But if there is anything only those who refuse to think can't see is that a magazine article is a waste except for the revenue it might yield. But again, you are inventing. You have for example, not asked me what I tried to do with this. You are happier in ignorance when you can inside yourself find justification for the irrelevancies and untruths and part truths. I did take them to some of the major media. The result was that I got an attempt at help in FOI lawsuits that couldn't be meaningful. I am aware of your concept of what everyone in the press thinks of me, but I tell you that one of the junior executives of a TV net arranged for their house counsel to consult with me to see if he could help on any of this stuff. And much, much more than the death certificate. You need not apologize, but ought you not at this very late date start contending with realities not fictions? Or instead of assuming that I was just sitting on these things, asking me? I went to syndicates, too. All of this is quite aside from moral and ethical question which I consider relevant, as relevant as if what I had produced were a tangible object fit for sale in a chain store. And ought you not be asking why the very many of means who make such lofty pretensions never considered that they might advance the cost of bringing the book out, and others likewise? I have much more than you know—and I have not kept it secret, not a single damned bit of it. Arch, for example, is worth \$50,000,000, I'm told. I went down to Texas even after he backed out of his offer to pay my fare. Mary can confirm this and much, much more about people of means to whom she has spoken.

This has to be moved into a different area and arena. I have long been working on it. I have one book completed that can do it, can get us the kind of allies we need, and at least two others started. (And by the way, this has nothing to do with efforts in commercial publishing, my own and those of at least a half-dozen people.) I think instead of offensive and factually false lectures about my sitting on things and suppressing, you and others ought

be asking yourselves and others if you have done what you could about this situation, if you have assumed your responsibilities with it, and if those who could have made it possible to bring this work and others out do not have some moral responsibilities with all the noble pretensions made and I hear. You once told me you have a right to spend your money as you see fit. True. But once you make this election, do not you and others have to live with it and assume the responsibility that goes with it? And don't for a minute think that Arch is the only case where I have tried and where others have. It is my painful experience that with people of means, principle stops at the checkbook.

I don't know what lies you could have been told or what you misrepresent to say that I have said "obscure" things about you. Unless it is that you have some need to believe and to say that I have "need to disparage and destroy others."

There is more that I could say about what I have already addressed, your fancy that I feel that people have betrayed me. But why don't you ask yourself about a couple of other cases to see whether, if I am bitter, I have cause, even in your own evaluation. Take just two you know well, Lifton and Maggie. The last time I saw Maggie I had been invited out there, all my expenses to be paid, and I'm still waiting for them, to help the San Diego committee, all of whose members have good salaries and they have yet to pay for my books they "bought" (also true of the L.A. Free Press. Steve Burton didn't arrange a pad for me. Maggie had no space to offer. I have told you about abandoning WWII to do as she asked. With no more than this, none of the things she said subsequently, would you deny that I'd be stone not to feel some emotion? Compare this with those of no means, like Mary, others in N.O., where I didn't even have the money to eat on unless others fed me, and only the people without means did.

Are you really rational when you allege that I believe "everyone is in a long-term conspiracy against you?" With my history of sharing everything so people could understand, inviting everyone here and even feeding them, marking copies of manuscripts and copyrighted books available, arranging at least two duplicate deposits of everything ~~that~~ I got and my government correspondence available to three others in all cases and more in most? Have words entirely lost their meaning to you?

When I can pay for it, I still invite people here and allow those who invite themselves. As best I can recall, only two were concerned about our ability to pay, Howard or his parents and Mary. Once in a while Jerry would bring what he liked, like San Gria or a sweet brandy because he liked them and therefore my wife should. In fact, she detests sweets. Even here Jerry, with the strange way his mind works, if he wanted to do something like that, wouldn't bring what he knew she used. And so far as groceries are concerned, he never thought of them. He did bring as many as seven others, all strangers to us, for a weekend, and we permitted it and other visits. And you accuse me of visualizing conspiracies against me? Is that why I wrote Cyril two years ago and said I had a safe way that could break the case open and the two of us could do it together and he has yet to respond? Is that why Cyril, with all his dedication and devotion to unselfishly bringing out the ~~the~~ pure truth and after leading me to believe he'd be a witness I badly needed in a law suit wrote me, when the time came, that it would cost him too much money, that he was so overloaded with profitable ventures he already had to give some up? I visualize conspiracies against me when you are silent about such matters as I have been silent about all of this until challenged?

I don't give a shit about how much I am "respected, admired and loved". It is not for acclaim that I have ruined my wife and inflicted on my wife what she has suffered. It is to do something. I think any accusation would come with better grace if anyone could show any meaningful sacrifice or any meaningful work after the 26. If people love, respect and admire, as I am happy that I do know some do, more than you have any way of knowing, for I've heard from perhaps 2,000 strangers, and if they are as dedicated as so many pretend, a few might have found some meaningful way of expressing it. Like helping with the work they are not doing. There is, as should be obvious, no possibility of profit in any of this for me, no way in which my wife or I can be compensated except in satisfaction for what we have done. There is no pay for such 8 years. Yet all the others lived in comfort, kept their jobs, latched onto every penny they could, fastened tightly to those they had accumulated earlier, and for a large part salved their consciences with slanders about me.

I asked you to take stock, and you respond by asking me. I again ask you. It is past time, and I think you'll be better off for it. I am genuinely sorry you are unwell.

Sincerely, *H. S. D.*

Thanks for the WHO lit on noise. I didn't get to the large minila envelopes until after supper. I hope to be able to find time to read them soon and to get to this, a pressing and impirtant problem for us. I've been spending too much time trying to help others. I suspect, from having glanced at your notes, that the second one is the one reported in tthe papers, the one that sounded relevant and interesting. This is a subject still hardly explored, as I know from our experiences, which would be impossible to credit if you didn't live through them and still seem impossible. All the work is done in terms of pressure measurements. This is legitimate but ignores an ernomous area of damage.

Thanks, HW