

10 October 1972

Mr. Edward R. Williams
308 Charles Street
Belleville, Ontario, Canada

Dear Ed,

I am grateful for the several notes and greeting cards which you sent me during the last several months, and to which I am now making a belated response. I became ill during the first week of June and was hospitalized in July for eleven days. After a deceptive week of seeming recovery, I had a frightening relapse. There followed ten nightmarish days alone in my apartment, and then readmission to the hospital for four weeks. "Recovered" again, I returned to work, lasting two weeks this time before becoming newly devastated by asthma and bronchial infection. ~~Yesterday I resumed work at my office, troubled by the enormous backlog in personal correspondence as well as in official paperwork.~~

Early in the course of this series of illnesses, recoveries, and relapses I learned from Dr. Cyril Wecht that finally he had received a go-ahead from Burke Marshall. I did not then reveal the degree of disability I was experiencing. I hoped that I would be sufficiently recovered to meet with Cyril and other critics to review the issues involved and the strategy to be followed. But my condition deteriorated, at one point to the degree that Dr. Wecht virtually suspected that I had been "reached" by the CIA.

There ensued a series of bitter quarrels and rivalries among the WR critics, some of whom regarded Wecht a priori as the enemy and determined to withhold help and advice from him, while others threatened to bury him entirely under an avalanche of facts and figures. Seldom has there been such a display of pettiness and pomposity—even more seldom on so juvenile a basis, with such unceasing accusations of ego-tripping and mutual malice.

In retrospect, I am glad to have been relatively far from the battleground, which offered rather less rationality than the psychiatric ward where I found myself, diagnosed as a case of "involuntional depression". Involuntional, my eye! It was a pure and pristine Warren Report depression, with side-effects of grotesque behaviour among the WR critics.

Ultimately, the Fred Graham story on the front page of the Sunday New York Times ("...mystery of missing brain...") appeared. I admit that I was rocked by the seeming self-fulfillment of Weisbergian prophesy. I was still naive enough to be shocked by Graham's slanting of his story, especially his implication of Wecht as a protege of the Fensterwald Committee and by analogy as a companion to the lunatic Garrison.

Later press reports of Wecht's remarks and especially the exclusive interview that appeared in the Enquirer (enclosed with your note of 4th October) could not be explained away as Graham-like distortion. I can only confess my disappointment and anguish at the repeated characterization of Oswald as the Tippit killer -- as one of the assassins of JFK -- at the Garrison/Lane fiction of RPK emissaries or an RPK reinvestigation of the case had he not been assassinated himself -- at the reckless and unsupported charges against the CIA, a la Garrison -- and especially at the comment by one of the advisers who crossed the continent to give Wecht the benefit of his advice and wisdom, to the effect that we WR critics will simply have to resign ourselves to the fact that the autopsy photos and X-rays support the Warren Commission's conclusions!

I am sorry indeed that Dr. Wecht did not limit his public commentary to the medical/autopsy materials, and that he did not hammer away harder at their irrecconcilability with the official WR conclusions. Oswald did not kill Tippit, as many critiques of the WR have demonstrated. Cyril fully

appreciates the fraudulence of the autopsy evidence. If that evidence is tainted and spurious, no other assemblage of evidence purporting to establish Oswald's guilt in any collateral crime can be given credence. But the nine-year brainwashing has been such as to trap even the most fearless WR critics into unintended concessions inculcating Oswald--see, for example, first page of the Wall Street Journal for 9th October 1972, interview with Chou En-lai, which states:

"He is convinced the identity of the 'principal culprit, the man who planned the assassination' of President Kennedy has never been divulged. 'It couldn't be' that Lee Harvey Oswald is 'the one who really killed him', Mr. Chou said firmly. "It is not possible."

Perhaps this is not the best example of the ambiguity of statements on Oswald's innocence rather than his guilt, but there are many other instances of unguarded references which are susceptible of misunderstanding but not sinister in intent.

If Dr. Wecht has made unfortunate allusions to parts of the case with which he is no longer familiar or which he never studied fully, e.g., the Tippit "evidence" so-called, which is amply discussed in the literature, he still remains a most outspoken and uncompromising adversary of the WR. What other forensic pathologists have spoken out consistently and bluntly? Have given time and effort to so many WR critics? Have risked personal reputation? Have incurred the hostility of the low creatures Pierre Finck and Russell Fisher? Even if Wecht did harm to the position of the critics--and in fact I have to concede that in some ways he did do some damage--does that invalidate his fundamental position, and must it have ominous or sinister implications?

I am not searching for an alibi for myself. I do not think that I could have influenced Wecht to abandon his effort to examine the autopsy materials but in plain fact I actively supported his application and confidently expected a dramatic turn-about in our vexing situation. There is blame enough to go around, and I willingly accept my portion of it.

Do any of the others also accept some culpability? I do not know and at this stage I do not really care very much. I have no regrets or apologies for the subject index, for Accessories, or for my loud and lonely opposition to Garrison. What I do regret somewhat is that I did not close the chapter completely, in 1968 or 1969, leaving the case in the hands of those who enjoy an omniscience which I do not possess, and a capacity for squabbling and malicious nonsense matched only by their disrespect for syntax and lack of professionalism.

I think we had an opportunity to reverse events and to establish forcefully and conclusively the innocence of Oswald and the operation of a vast conspiracy, a virtual coup d'etat. I think that we have missed the opportunity, as Harold Weisberg and Howard Roffman and perhaps others predicted. That is so bitter a blow to me and also to many others, I am sure, that I am going to discontinue even the random, casual contacts with other critics, and also turn my back on requests for information or advice. It is too painful and too non-productive, and I do resent having my motives impugned whether by other WR critics or by the authors and supporters of that infamous work.

This letter is a general explanation of my position, as well as a specific reply to you, Ed, and I will circulate copies to others rather than send them individual replies. Please keep well and happy in your new setting and I will always be glad to hear from you as a personal and valued friend.

Sylvia Meagher

NOT

10 October 1975

SENT

Mr. Edward R. Williams
308 Charles Street
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

Dear Ed,

I am grateful for the several notes and greeting cards which you sent me during the last several months, and to which I am now making a belated response. I became ill during the first week of June and was hospitalized in July for eleven days. After a deceptive week of seeming recovery, I had a frightening relapse. There followed ten nightmarish days alone in my apartment, and then readmission to the hospital for four weeks. "Recovered" again, I returned to work, lasting two weeks this time before becoming re-hospitalized by asthma and bronchial infection. I resumed work at my office, troubled by the enormous backlog in personal correspondence as well as in official paperwork.

Early in the course of this series of illnesses, however, and in fact learned from Dr. Quinn about that finally he had received a 60-second three Burke Marshall. I did not then reveal the degree of disability I was experiencing. I hoped that I would be sufficiently recovered to meet with Quinn and other critics to review the issues involved and the strategy to be followed. But my condition deteriorated, at one point to the degree that Dr. Quinn virtually expected that I had been "rescued" by the U.S. There ensued a series of bitter quarrels and rivalries among the critics, none of whom regarded me as an ally as the enemy and determined to withhold help and advice from me, while others threatened to turn me entirely over to the hands of the U.S. I believe that there were many a variety of feelings and reactions--never more subtle or so universal a basis, with even occasional accusations of ego-tripping and mutual hatred.

Not Sent