

1/25/71

Dear Sylvia,

Thanks for the / 1/22 modification re LHO NO library. This remains an interesting area, was of interest to JG's people very early, they did find some strange aspects I do not recall, including, I think, either literature, notations or both in books LHO had taken out, and there remains the fiction that he had Ferrie's card on him when apprehended, an invention that could not have been more perfectly designed to focus attention on him, his use of the library, and the books he had taken out.

Your SS report is consistent with one Bud got not too long ago and is not inconsistent with very early criticism from U. Baughman, former chief. Bud's report was even more pointed than the conclusion of your last par. It seems unlikely to me, however, that precautions as extensive as those Bud outlined would or could have been feasible in most large cities.

With Rowley, I have no information, nor have I on why higher-echelon agents were not along. With regard to the absence of a camera truck, which may be related, I do not now recall my source, but it seems this was one of the arrangements left to local arrangements committees.

It is possible that Rowley did accompany other Presidents when he had a lower rank, or because he felt it required of him, or because he enjoyed trips and the opportunity to meet and talk with local agents, etc. The one thing of which I am convinced, despite their rather large blunders, is that the SS is the agency least likely to have been involved in any kind of conspiracy. I know you do not really suggest this. They have also been cooperative in ways other agencies have not been, despite the severity of my criticisms of them. They have confirmed reports I have gotten not in WC materials and have supplied me with data not in those records, as you can see when you are here, and some of it is significant. They have been willing to discuss and explain certain things, including their attitudes about some things. And I think their record on declassification is better than that of any other agency closely concerned. I believe they will yet be more helpful.

Hastily,



22 January 1971

Dear Harold,

I think that I may have given you a bum steer on that 10/3/63 date. After corresponding with Mary Ferrell on the matter of the books borrowed by Oswald from the New Orleans public library, I realized that I may have given the wrong interpretation to the column heading "Card Shows Return Date" in CE 2650. Whereas I took this to mean the date on which the books were actually returned, Mary feels that what is meant is the date on which the books were due back for return. If she is right, and she may well be, then Oswald did not return books on 10/3/63 but borrowed books at an earlier date which were due back on 10/3/63 but which he might have returned earlier.

Mary also called my attention to a CE which I had forgotten, an undated letter written but not mailed by Oswald, to the New Orleans library, contesting the allegation that he had failed to return certain borrowed books (see CE 1403 in XXII page 767).

My "discovery" is therefore, at best, ambiguous and may not be of real significance in terms of Oswald's whereabouts or the other possibilities we discussed when I phoned you.

At the risk of giving you another bum steer, let me repeat something I heard the other night from a stranger whom I met through a mutual friend. When the conversation turned to the JFK assassination, this man told us that a few days after 11/22/63 he had met socially a former Secret Service agent (retired after some 20 years in the SS). They had of course talked about the events in Dallas, which were quite fresh at the time, and during the conversation the ex-agent had insisted that until Dallas, James Rowley, the head of the SS, always and without exception had accompanied every president on every trip and taken personal charge of security. The ex-agent also said that it was standard operating procedure throughout his tenure in the SS for an advance party in the city to be visited to go to every building along a motorcade route and speak to the superintendent or owner, to ensure (1) that the occupants would be forbidden to open windows during the motorcade, and (2) an agent would be posted on the roof.

I am repeating this, for what it is worth. It may or may not be accurate information.

Best,

