

Ep -
Dear Sylvia,

3/8/78

As always there is a rush. Today because I lost yesterday having to go to Washington for an FOIA hearing (the judge caught the government lying), because I lost part of this morning with my weekly blood test, and because shortly I will be picked up to make a speech to the executives club of the first good-sized city to the west. Neither snow nor more snow nor ice nor more ice...

Having no time I begin with a story. I read your letter while awaiting the blood-testing, at the lab. I think I recall enough because I appreciated the letter.

After yesterday's calendar call the chief of the FOIA litigation section of DJ, who was there with four other lawyers, one from the FBI Office of Legal Counsel, introduced Jim and me to the two newest. One she said was assigned to our newest case. Which one is that, Jim and I both asked. When she told us we laughed and informed her that it was not the newest. She hasn't caught up with them all.

Nor has the FBI, and the enclosed carbon shows.

We have that many. Having no choice we'll have more when it is humanly possible for Jim of the super-human efforts.

As of a short while ago Jim had until the end of this week to complete legal research and file a response to the DJ's effort to expunge an addendum we filed in the suit for the withheld ex. sess. transcripts, now before the appeals court, at the briefing stage. (His, of course, is not all that is pressing upon him now.)

Your questions are very good ones. If you could find time to address them to Readers Digest it could be very helpful. Maybe Barron and Melvin Laird both. Maybe also to CIA, which did provide him what it has gone to court to deny me.

Maybe the p.r. office at the Digest. Or if the Epsteiner's agent is known to you...

Jim and I can't do it. Your ideas are excellent and might, even if without response, be of help in this litigation at some point prior to its end. If we lose at this level we'll have to file a new suit based on the new information blabbed with so pronounced an Epsteink. (I'm glad you do not follow Peacock on this!)

Policoff was onto this more than a year ago but I suppose for lack of time and market did not follow it as I'd have wished - and tried to prompt.

When the book is out there will be the usual promotional efforts. That you have a copy prior to the appearance of the second condensation next month is in itself unusual unless it was a review or restricted copy. Scott Malone has one but did not tell me how he obtained it.

The promotional efforts, with the yellow Epsteinker, will not be in confrontation. ~~Therefore~~ Therefore it behoves us to make advance requests of all the network shows like Today, Good Morning America, CBS Morning News, etc. I hope you would do this in your own name. You could handle it magnificently, have read the book and I hope have more time. But if you are reluctant, as I hope very much you are not, please offer me from Washington, where all originate and I'd not have to go to New York. I'd ask for a simultaneous airing of the other side before there is another side. If it is agreed to I suspect there will be less bad odor on the airwaves. The next thing for you would then be an airing of sweet truth w/o Epsteink. I am sure he'll not face either of us. If his appearance is worth the air time his refusal to appear and the reasons, the exposure of his book, surely is worth no less.

I do hope you will do this. I understand they've sold the tinif to five book clubs. It is what is left of a CIA job, ~~with~~ with Epsteinker turning to those I suppose were all along his political peers, those finally ousted from the CIA and now revanchist. He is even unfair to the FBI. I'd have no trouble defending it on this question.

I've read and marked up the New York pieces. I have but have not read Digest No. 1. Thanks and best wishes,

6 March 1978

Dear Harold,

Many thanks for your letter of 2/27/78 and for the non-defamatory FBI document on myself. I feel a little chagrined--it is something like the disappointment of being left off Nixon's enemies list. But perhaps something defamatory and scurrilous will still turn up; if so, I hope that you and/or the AIB people will send it to me.

Thanks also for coining that delightful new appellation "Epsteinker". I enjoy it and have adopted it. I have now read his book "Legend" and regard it as an insidious and dishonest work, parts of which are despicable and outrageous.

The first question that must be asked is how this book came to be written--was it commissioned? if so, by whom and for what purpose? Epsteinker had an enormous budget and a huge staff. Who made Nosenko available to him and why? Did he pay for interviews and if so are the results of the interviews tainted? I think there is probably a big story in how Epsteinker came to do this book but that it will be a carefully guarded secret. Someone was anxious to tie Oswald (and the assassination) in with the Russians (and/or the Cubans); and thus to divert suspicion from where it belongs, which is within the home Establishment. Did Epsteinker succeed in making a case for Oswald as a KGB agent? Certainly he did not. His book is a gradiose vessel for very slender cargo of evidence. It is a mixture of speculation and innuendo and he does not even have the guts to state a clear conclusion on his own part.

What is so ridiculous is that he argues, in effect, that Oswald was both a KGB agent and a lone assassin. For that purpose, he presents an Appendix on "The Status of the Evidence" which out-does the Warren Commission itself in perverting fact and evidence to sell the lone-assassin thesis--even going so far as to claim that the oak tree was bare and no obstacle to an earlier first shot. One need only look at CE 900 to judge the outrageous falsehood of that allegation. It is so outrageous and preposterous that I do not regard it as merely a falsehood but as a deliberate cynical fabrication, which Epsteinker knows will be obvious only to the community of critics but which the public and the ignorant book-reviewers will swallow whole. The entire Appendix is of the same cloth as the oak tree allegation--a monstrous deceit and distortion for which there is no possible excuse.

There are a few things that are potentially damaging, if they are true --but it will take a lot more than "evidence" presented by Epsteinker to lend them any legitimacy. One item is that De Mohrenschildt had in his possession a photograph of Oswald holding the rifle which was inscribed by both LHO and Marina (and Epsteinker claims that a handwriting expert verified that it was Marina's handwriting). But he does not publish the photograph or name the handwriting expert, and he even avoids a flat statement that he himself saw this photo. Unless and until this is truly authenticated, I will classify it with the oak tree allegation.

The second item is Epsteinker's claim in the body of the book that John Bowen (at Jaggars-Chiles-Stovall) and Gary Taylor both saw the rifle in Oswald's possession (in the footnote, this is changed to Gary Taylor and Alexandra De M. Taylor, with Bowen dropped). But Gary Taylor said no such thing in his Warren Commission testimony--why should one believe him now? As for Bowen, he is an ex-convict, using an alias, and I would like to know if he was paid for giving Epsteinker an interview.

over

On the other hand, the book contains material that is very damaging to the CIA, the FBI, and the Warren Commission. You will recognize it easily when you read it.

The book got a largely favorable review yesterday in the NY Times Book Review section, written by Kevin Buckley. However, I am told that the NY Times is seething and furious about the book and it is interesting that it has not done any news story on it.

The book is based largely on material from Angleton—indeed, it could be said that it is Angleton speaking through Epstein and for his own purposes. Just to show again what an incompetent idiot and/or cynical liar Epstein is, he even repeats from the lying Warren Report the allegation, exposed long ago as sheer falsehood, that Oswald arrived in London on October 9th and departed the same day for Helsinki! I need not emphasize how much that offends me personally.

I will be most interested to hear what you think of this 1984 book when you have read it.

All the best,

As ever,

