

1/4/68

Dear Maggie,

When Hal Verb was here this past summer, among the things he had with him was a copy of Roger Craig's WC testimony that he supposedly went over at your house and noted the errors made by the court reporter. It was in the form of a Xerox or 3M copy of the printed testimony.

Now I have had enough experience with court reporters to know that this was palpably not so. He had the chance to see his testimony before it was printed. Whether he did or not I do not know. I do know that in some cases the Commission counsel took great liberties with the testimony, particularly my great and good friend Liebeler, who should be disbarred for some of what he pulled (and I do have it in my possession).

I would like a copy of this, if you have it, in the event serious consideration is given to using him as a witness in New Orleans. I sent a memo mentioning this and urging against using him not because he is by intent dishonest or anything like that, simply because I think he would not be dependable. If you could send a second copy to Andrew Sciambre in N.O. that would speed things up. They should have made their decisions on witnesses in a week.

The autopsy witnesses will be, in my opinion, the two best in the country. Not as well-known as the over-advertised Helpert, who is willing to assume what he does not know and on this pontificate, Drs. Jack Nichols and Cyril Wecht are solid men. I've never met Wecht, but we have been in correspondence. He is both a lawyer and a doctor, and this is his specialty. Jack is an excellent forensic pathologist who has done some of the finest original work on narrow aspects of our side. We've been in correspondence and visited each other. He read my unpublished POST MORTEM a year ago. He is a rifle buff, was on his college rifle team, and has been testing things out for himself. I am much encouraged by this, for these men, given the chance to testify fully and honestly, will make the important official record so needed. Jack has quite an impressive collection of his own pictures of his own ballistics work, too.

Thanks for the information Steve passed along on Lamarre. I have written him further, rather hastily. I then reread his material. When you speak to him (and if you have personal knowledge) two additional things may be of value: what was he doing in the US in August - and in Nevada; and is anything known of those to whom he gave credit- or why? Especially those in the U.S., to whom first-name credit only is given? I know a man-wife combination Bernard and Pat! Only he is never known as "Bernard". I've wondered from the first if he is homosexual, an impression I got from looking at him and the way he looks at people. He had been talking about his search for girls in N.O. at the Red Barn, but it had a futile sound to me. He credits, in England, one Rene Lamarre. A brother? Is not the feminine form with two ees? Has he ever accompanied by a woman, a wife? Steve B is being pretty honest. I am sorry for the position he is in. I hope the personal problems I think I detected, probably a function of youth and inexperience, are passing off. He's a great boy. I've also asked him to overcome his thing with Jaffe and get him to put everything down as dispassionately as he can, as I asked Jaffe also. No response yet. Have a good year, all of you.

Sincerely,
Harold Weisberg

I hear Ray snatched a copy of the film "Farewell America" that Lamarre had given Newcomb. Great! I hope he regards this as more than a souvenir, as I presume one with Ray's mind and attitudes would. When you speak to him, I'd like very much to have a copy to study and to have technical people go over the Z parts of. Also, if he hasn't already done so, we should have slides made immediately, and of the area before and after Z313, close study should be made. Careful examination of the slides will show that the glib talk by the uninformed seeking sensation rather than fact is quite wrong about the backward motion being simultaneously to the back and left. They are discontinuous, with the body actually pivoting. Some of the experts I want to consult about the wounds, which are fairly visible in stills, and seem unnatural to me. There is no blood, for example, on the back of the neck, none on the collar, which I seem to recall is visible (shirt). If he can and will do this, I want to be able to go over this with Wecht and Nichols as soon as possible. There is a tentative date with Wecht in N.O. 1/17.

Also, of course, the later frames show part of the knoll. Perhaps in some way the earlier frames may be the most significant, for I have the Commission evidence of a shot as early as 163! Their experts initially said he had to have been shot before 210. I have this in some detail in POST MORTEM. When one of the experts refused to be bamboozled, they just didn't call him as a witness. I'd like very much to be able to go over this stuff with him.

I also hope that with slides and, if possible, transparencies in addition (used on an offset-table to make overlays also) Ray will continue his own brilliant work at 237. I am confident I can have several people do a very good job of tracings, artists, that is. Fred is willing, a bit wild, but worst of all, basically cowardly. In any event, he cannot be asked to do this.

If you examine the Z footage, I early learned one of the best ways of seeing what is there (for me, at least) is in reverse. This seems to capture the eye in a different way. Also, slow-motion. In making slides, it is important not to crop. The proportions will give more frame than is normal in 35. If the copying is done with the bottom of the 16 frame at the bottom of the 35 frame, there may be, as there is copying the 8mm, a little excess at the top of the 35mm frame. This is quite significant in that the President is at the bottom of Z's frames, thus you get a comparison between consecutive frames.

Should Ray have done what I've been told, I hope he will do as I ask. This gives us an opportunity we haven't had before, because, under the wrong influences, Garrison failed to go further than his headline. Sciombra is the only one in the office who really understands the Z film. He and I went over it very carefully in the Archives early last year. How I long to go over ~~it~~ this with Nichols and Wecht and to have my artist make tracings! All three can qualify as experts. Nichols and Wecht are both, in addition, forensic experts, and Nichols, aside from his considerable rifle experience and ballistics work, has crime-lab experience, too. I am little worried about a suit by LIFE, for I've already published their pictures, without threat, and I've regularly aired them on TV. I've also interviewed Z, by the way. He is a real Judenrat! Born to it! Then perfectly shaped to it by life. What a novel he would make!

Dawn is breaking, and I must get to other work. I've heard the weather forecast. They do not expect it to get out of the teens today. How does that sound in Southern California?

Sincerely,