

Copy Davison file

11/8/69

Dear Paul,

Your mailing of the fourth, with letters of the 3rd and 4th and assorted other goodiest, arrived yesterday in a rather heavy mail some of which I had to tent to earlier today (having been unable to touch it yesterday), and I am strangely weary. There is so much good in your mailing I may not be able to address it all at once.

Brosnears: glad to be kept up to date, but he is a terrible person, unscrupulous and not in any way helpful.

Your note 10 27 to John. Many thanks. That is it. The Area sent me a copy with no identification of source.

First let me address the Davison matter, without consultation with the files, for I'm too tired to do the reading this require of me, and the moving. And in addressing it alone, in a sense I take it out of context.

My request of you and Gary that henceforth you no distribute any more information comes from a number of reasons and from instincts, for it is in an area where I have had experience in the past and my recent experiences you have not had. It stems only in part from mistrust of some of the people who might get it. Here I know we are in disagreement, and since I cannot transpose my knowledge into your thinking beliefs and you are unwilling to know of it anyway, I avoid that, save in generalities.

This is one of the very most sensitive areas, if not the single most sensitive area of official thin-skin reaction. A few of the things in this aspect of which you know are the Commission refused to examine the FBI or CIA files, when produced and the fact that the most crucial evidence was destroyed. You know enough of the dissembling, falsification and withholding, even from the Commission and you know the Commission was more than silent, was in accord. The entire matter of Oswald's federal connections is perhaps the poorest handled of all, and it is not by accident. It is potentially explosive, and it is the kind of thing (you may never have considered this) about which there might more readily be retaliation. They didn't go to all that trouble for nothing.

Now what I asked is not total silence. I asked for a "need to know" standard. This means that unless there is one who has been working in this area and is beyond my question and likely trust anyway, then in his duty as a judge, he should be given nothing else. It is not the kind of things that should be shared with those who are or may be at all mentally untinged, who are blabbermouths, or who might in any way make any use at all until the entire thing has been carried as far as we can. I will return to interviewing B, for I believe we are far from that point, that there is much to be done, and I have initiated some of it. I do not only urge this, I practice it. As an example, although I trust Dick Bernabe and like him personally, and although I know he is aware of this, I have not sent him what I have sent you and Gary, and it certainly is not because I have any question about Dick. It just serves no purpose to tell him, the mere act of communication can be a kind of jeopardy, and carelessness can result in word of it getting around.

What are the possible dangers from word getting around? Well, we now have enough—at least I do, and I have shared most of it with you—to make a prima facie case of Oswald's federal connection. There are many people with influence and certain capabilities and no reluctance to employ them who may, at the very least, be displeased about this. Displeasure is likely a very considerable

understatement. Second, there is a demonstrated closing of doors when we get close to really meaningful things. I have experienced this quite often, and I think you are aware of it. When Rhoads writes me he will not let me have anything on the autopsy other than the panel report and the GSA-family contract, both of which I have, he is grossly in violation of the law and I would presume he has not made this decision on his own....Someone is keeping very accurate records of who is getting what, at least as it applies to me, for this is demonstrated, and I do not believe anyone is anxious to do wasted work, that this is the normal way that bureaucracy works. Thus, while we can assume someone may be analyzing the requests, to learn where they point, we need not assume it is in all cases a tactical, nor should we go out of our way to flag their interest, for this can lead to the withdrawal of what may exist of which we now have no knowledge. I believe you have no trouble understanding that the official representation of the revision matter is at the very best merely a demonstration of anything that can be termed sincerity or investigation. My memo pointed out enough evidences of this. It is no more because they are incompetent or careless than the 544 bit was (and we haven't finished with that, either). This is conscious coveringup. That means someone had to know what was really involved, innocent or not. In short, while this does not exhaust the possibilities, I think it demonstrates what I am trying to convince you of, that this is a ticklish aspect where we run unnecessary risks in treating it with any looseness at all. These jeopardize the success of the venture and it is neither paranoid nor unreasonable to consider other and more unwelcome consequences or retaliation. Because there is no prospect of accomplishing anything worthwhile in being immature or overly-generous in gratuitous distribution of this material where it is not to be immediately used in secret and with discretion, by those willing to work toward full development of it and emotionally and intellectually capable of doing this with the greatest circumspection, what should prevail is the desirability of not running any unnecessary dangers, no matter how remote any one of us might consider them to be. If you get knocked on the head, it will be little comfort that in unintendedly causing it I had no evil intention....If all of this is removed from your experience deals with what your own experience and intelligence are unwilling to accept, I can only offer my assurances it is not unreal, not unusual and is, for the interests involved, in no sense unusual. I cannot convey all my experiences, recently and over 58 years, to you. But for whatever it is worth, I give you my most sincere assurances I have lived in this environment and have had recent experiences warranting such expression to you. I think Gary will agree that there are recent evidence of mail interception, for example, and reason to believe it is not impossible that one of "us" who I have for long regarded as undependable at best is possessed of knowledge we cannot immediately account for in any other way.

Shorthand: if there is no certainty of need, don't. In too many other areas, there are powerful people who are getting up tight. Don't do this. Be a whole helluva lot more careful. If you are not dealing with the lawyers, the doctors, the civilized, or the controlled or controllable. I could go much further with this but I hope it isn't necessary. As if now I would think this should involve only you, Jim, Gary and me.

Now I have taken one step outside of this. It was a decision I had to make on the spot and I did it, believing it is to a person I can trust and who can help us. It first of all is a person who may be available is Wise isn't and may, in the long run, be better than Wise. His knowledge involves only me, and if there is any hazard, it will be to me and not you, for he knows nothing of our communication on this. Here, he knows only the simplest: that there is this diary entry. He recognizes the name and knew enough about it. He will consult an extensive potential source for us. How soon he can I do not know, but I do expect to hear from him soon and may learn of it. He is a reporter for a major newspaper. Not the London Times man, of whom I wrote earlier.

Next, we'll have to wait and see whether Bud can get a copy of the

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British versions. If you can get the names of the various published works on this, I have other means, in Britain, and I will try them. I think we should exhaust all source of available information before any final steps, and speaking to Davison is really a final one. There is much that can be learned before then, much that is really prerequisite to it. We gave to consider the possibility if not the probability he had an intelligence function, so he is not about to blab that he knew LHO also had. Whatever the Russians put out on this we should all go over carefully, which means a translation. I would hardly expect anyone else to put much out....

I think Kelley's BR 12/9 may well be worth considerable effort, if we learn only that it is classified... a yourself why Oswald would write a European? Would he?... I know of no limitation on embassy personnel imposed by either country, so there is no need for the doctor to be military, and her diplomatic nor budgetary. It may have worked out that way, but I doubt it. If it has no relevance in this case, it nonetheless gave Davison a recognized status others did not have. All in the various military attaches' offices are intelligence. This is as normal as breathing.... In your comment on 10307:4, I suggest you consider if there was the slightest reason of need for the FBI to be misdirected or permit itself to be, since it had primary information available. That it engages in this kind of pseudo-incompetence is in itself significant, as is what it could not leave out and what it did. The connection of either Davison with the Russian Studies Institute is significant. This is one of the least popular areas of advanced study, with limited commercialization available. The biggest market for such training is federal. Whether 431 Riverside is an in-occant address is not material, for if it had meaning its in-occance would be an asset not a liability. It is precisely the kind of address preferred. I grant it can be without meaning. That is not, though, is that after the mother was interviewed, there was, could or should have been any official doubt about the whereabouts of her sons. Not even the FBI at its worst can be that bad. You should remember enough comparable situations covered in reports where, if someone sought her out of town, his return was awaited. Willis was important, but his is a case that comes immediately to mind. That in this case they did not if he were only away briefly magnifies his importance and that of the voids in reporting. Do you think he had so little contact with his mother or brother that he was several months behind in his brother's location? I doubt it.... Then ask yourself about the delays, when this was known immediately by the people who hid Hosty in that book.

Your next paragraph leaves unclear whether you agree with my suggestion about not distributing or mentioning this, one of the reasons for the long foregoing further effort at explanation. However, I expect a graduate student at Columbia, a close friend and trusted man, former reporter, to spend the next week here and I'll go over this with him. If he can find time, he can do the checking there. He is the one responsible for several of our successes of the past, where he got others to speak to those who would not speak to me.... Meanwhile, one of the best secrets of all time is in the Charlotteville area. It is in VA. If Jim, who is wonderful at this, can check the yellow pages of the Charlottesville Directory, it might be interesting if he has no office for private practise. If I can think of it when I am near a pay phone, I'll try through information. But if there is no listing, I'd like a xerox of that page. The only people I know in that area are in a position where I should not ask this of them. However, if he is there, I think that at the right time I might accept their invitation to visit them!... What is the listing for Alexis in the 1967 Amer. Med. Dir. Merely his name?... Off-hand, I think checking the father is not worthwhile. We can assume he was anti-Soviet and a prominent man in his later years, but this means nothing, really, except how the sons were indoctrinated in their impressionable years... I note in my file several 1965 clippings. This indicates to me that I was aware of the possible significance then and forgot it entirely, for I had no other reason for clipping this subject. I believe I also clipped the serialization, but I cannot find it. These and the London Times clips are enclosed. I haven't yet had time to read the. If you find anything of value that any reporter I might enlist would want to know, would you please make an extra copy for me for this purpose? Ditto for Gary if you think there is in them what he should have. Stopping for while.