2/10/75

Dear Walter,

There is a kind of fascination with the idea that Bantam is being set up with a fake book for someone's ulterior purposes. On the basis of limited knowledge all, of course, is conjecture. The set-up is conjecture; the fake is fairly certain in my mind, as of now. So, I've gotten one of your relevant books, The Day of the Jackal, and I've read to p.49. With daylight approach, I've laid it aside and make a new notes.

To this point there are several factors that someone toying with Bantam might enjoy if he is enaged in the enterprise I postulate. Your own book should alert you to the improbability of Romero.

The Romero assassination attempt is said to have been planned for from an apartment of another, high up, and with a rifle equipped with a scope. The Ecole Militaire attempt that failed fits this exactly. If I don't know why it failed, I have already told you that real professionals would eschew a high shooting point for that is the most difficult shooting, the worst angle, and should have been unnecessary.

Marc Rodin's thinking is persuasive. He rules out any OAS assassin on the ground that all are too well known to the French Secret Service. Thus the thinking of the OAS high command is that none of their own can safely pull the job. Compared with Romero, this means that for themselves, their own political objectives, they would not approve an attempt on deGaulle by one of their onw but for foreign interests they would. This makes no sense. If Romero says he got approval within the OAS, Jackal says he could not have.

The logic that directed Rodin to an "outsider" is sound. Romero was not such an "outsider". He was exactly opposite the proper conditions set forth in Jackal. He was the danger to what remained of the OAS that its leadership was unwilling to risk in its own interests. He could have jeopardized many of his colleagues if caught, unlike the Englishman, and the "persuasion" of the Secret Service was well-known before Jackal.

Without previous experience in unsuccessful assassination attempts, only fools would not have reasoned as Rodin did. The project would have been disapproved.

2/11. I told or wrote you about the impossibility of any competent assassin or real marksman even thinking of firing a weapon he had not learned, whose sights he had not adjusted to his own vision and reflexes. You will find the actuality of the requirements in Jackal, pp. 173-4, Bantam edition. If Jackal is fiction, this is, nonetheless, a faithful representation of what the marksman must do. If you want it in Remington's instructions (no, not for assassins!) I'll be glad to xerox and send. This is true for any kind of sight but more so for a scope.

2/13. I've finished Jackal. In my opinion it does not exaggerate what good police work can do, and that would have been better known to any intelligence agency hiring an assassin as it would have been to anyone in OAS who was active. The world is full of self-starters in the various spookeries, of irresponsible people who, like E.Howard Hunt, ignore the law and decide for themselves what is right and wrong. Getting $400,000 for the CIA and in McCone's day for such a project would have been close to impossible. If self-starters raised it themselves from private sources, too many people would have had to know about it for such a plot to be dared, from the L'Aurore account alone. And the OAS leadership would not, in my opinion, have authorized the attempt. If they had, they'd have insisted on a switch of targets, for Charlot would have been as good a target as JFK. In short, what I am saying is that in addition to the facts the book can't survive as non-fiction, it is also illogical. Can that be part of its attractiveness?

I would appreciate a good copy if one is around, just to keep in the library I am building for some archive of the future of assassination literature. I will then give my copy to a friend who, if he and or his wife have time to read it, can get a separate evaluation of what I see and report. The copy I have is coverless, was salvaged from discard by a store employee, not sold after claiming credit.

My huch is that if the intelligence community is not in some way responsible for the fortuitous appearance of Romero it already has copies of the book and has done more than I with it. If it is responsible, the preparation will be greater for exploitation would have been intended.

If your people are putting much money into this venture and would like to go over my files of an earlier, rumorsful fake, they are welcome to. Best,