Hoch

1/11/69

Dear Gary,

I'm using up an old ribbon, because anyone I put in would dry out while I am in N.O. My present schedule will be sometime after this coming Friday, when I have to be in DC. I'll hear from Moo.

Your two letters of the 9th arrived today. First let me tell you, try and persuade you, that your school work must come first, must not in any way be jeopardized. If it means dropping everything, do that. If it means dropping part, stop the appearances. In terms of what you can do to help, I think nothing compares with a Summer at the Archives. That can be invaluable. As soon as it seems possible, I will try and arrange for you to have a place to stay in Washington, so that on those nights you want to work late or go out you w ill not have the long drive to and from here (which will also save you gas money).

Patsy: check.

Newcomb: My letter to him enclosed.

Thompson: there is reason to believe that (without seeing, which could prove this wrong) the FA film was put together from transperencies. I have seen their transparencies, printed in a sheet, I think two per, and there is neither part of the adjoining frame nor sprocket holes. The proportions would not, normally, permit this. It is possible LIFE built a clue into each copy of the film it made, thus making it possible to pinpoint any leak. Not in Dallas, but thereafter. If the agency did this and if Thompson's stuff was available, they could have anticipated this possibility. Now, do you suppose for one minute that Thompson got his artist into LIFE's vault to make sketches from the original? I don't think he used that source, anyway. Possibly from an original copy, or transparencies made from the original.

I am not in touch - and will not be -with Popkin, about anything. He lifted too much of his book from my work and then clobbered me - including at least one typographical error. His publisher then tried to persuade me to enter suit before publication, in order to promote his book. I would never be able to restrain myself, so I am silent, stay away. I was in San Diego and did not look him up. I presume he was away, for he was not at my appearances of the several little gettogethers the people out there arranged. Also, when the NY Review, and I presume he, know I knew, for I wrote, there were no changes in the later form. On the book, and without my permission, they used my name to promote it.

Joesten's stuff is not worth reading if given free. The film in Canada involved Similas and publication. Not to be available without publication. Dick Vernabei is Dept Classics, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada.

If Vince has been in touch with N.O, and done the things he told you he would, he has been silent. I have heard nothing from him

Depends on when Sahl used the stuff if it is hurtful. I knew in advance and was asked not to and didn't.

The Forensic Sciences article suggesting the possibility of a

frangible bullet is one I do not think I have. However, if Wecht does not conjecture, I will be satisfied, for the case against the autopsy is that solid. I have arranged to show him my unpublished autopsy material in advance of his testimony. Will not now be able to Friday, as previoualt scheduled. On Sibert and O'Neill, if their report can get it, it is better than they would allow themselves to be.

On Walthers-Hughes: not necessarily so. We have only Walthers' word on when she looked. How can she be that precise? Mens figures cann be higher then the boxes behind the window. The seeming motion Thompson alleges could, I think, eb the distortion from the cheap lens of a panning, inexpensive camera. However, if there are men in the background, that does not hurt; it helps, for the whole point here is to show conspiracy.

Moo not only called me; he got me out of bed New Year's Eve, which did not surprise me. I alsoam surprised that he calsed since then.

A copy of my Archives letter, confirming my verbal direction that they use my funds to keep from slowing down your order, is enclosed. I would have liked to have made a larger deposit. I wish some of the big-talking big shots would help pay for the documents they do not help dig out.

Last night Moo told me he expects the Monday decision to be against Shaw and, from something Wegmann or Dymond said, that they will then, again, go to the State Supreme Court. This will result in at least some delay, and I am not against that at this point. It would in some ways be better if the whole thing could be put off until after Mardi Gras. Jim was insane to set the date as he did. They will also be looking for more official evidence. The only thing he mentioned is the rifle. I suggested instead that they seek the original evidence on the various tests and a competent witness to be examined on them. There may be other such items. I should hear by tomorrow night if there is. He amplified what he had said of Gurvich-Sheridan going around interviewing their potential witnesses to day they also had copies of the statements. On this they can and should do something.

Sincerely,

1/9/69

Dear Harold:

Just a brief note on your letters re Bernabei stuff. The Thompson story, while interesting, is probably just a distortion of the story about him getting frames of the film. What I am interested in is the possibility that a film was constructed from these frames by the company and then put ## in Farewell America. I realize that it is more likely that they got theirs directly from the govt. version, but if it turns out that they have Life's version, and if the film could be examined, this might be susceptable to proof. Also, Thompson clearly states in his book that his sketches were made from the original Z slides, thus reddering them lifelike.

I was astounded to learn that Kick Bernabei was from Cornell. So was Lifton and of course Epstein. So far, Cornelians are only batting about 50%. I would like his address since I would like to drop him a note--could you send it the next time you write.

Gillis's mention of Popkin having photos dealing with the Bobby assassination is fascinating. It would be interesting to learn with whom, and how much contact Tink still has with people. Sylvia is very indirect on the point. I assume that you are getting in touch with Popkin about the photos.

The Huie stuff is fascinating likewise. There are all sorts of possibilities. I assume that Sprgue will demand from him (nicely) what Huie told him in terms of the photo of Frenchie, although I can imagine that it's not the guy, even if Huie and/or Ray say it is.

How can Ray's description correspond closely with Frenchy, when he was described in Look as a blond haired Cuban? This is lunacy anyway, to say that someone's description matches a photo. All you can say is that it doesn't appear to be inconsistent with a photo.

I am interested in anything which Dawnay has dug up, although I would treat it like something of Penn's. He is far too far off the ground for Dick, no matter what his skills, to bring down. His newsletter is sheer lunacy. Joesten's is too expensive to order. The new price, at 1/2 off, ### is #### $7.50 per three months, which is too much to pay for a few mimeographed sheets of utter nonesense or stolen material. This brings back the FBI's description of his wife's description of his behavior after the assassination--it was pretty weird in the weeks following.

What ever happened to that film #### or photos which (I think Dick) has made a deal for in Canada. Was it Similas or Simpson--I've forgotten.

Could you possibly send a copy of Dick's letter to Vince. He is interested in that material and I want to keep him alert on this stuff. I have prevailed upon him to contact N.O. and find out whether, and when and how, Turner has tried to contact the office, and how many of the promises made to Vince were kept, why Jim is still with Bud's committee, etc. Turner is still very much in on things and is still capable of much destruction. I put Sprague in a general category with Jaffe on some counts since he just contributes to the problem of keeping Jim in line and the investigation on the right track.

Take care. Give my regards to your wife.

January 9, 1969

Dear Harold,

Thanks for all the stuff. Your pace of work and its quality never seases to amaze me. You manage to keep the govt. running on all fronts plus investigate plus help prepare the Shaw case. Enclosed is a letter from Fred Newcomb. I have already asked for a memo on the Turner-Rose stuff mentioned, and will send a copy if,and when he can do it. Put it in your Turner-Rose file. More fuel to the fire, as though we really need it.

Your letter to Penn was a good one. If I didn't send you mine when I wrote it, it is somewhat similar to yours only with empasis on false info rather than his obvious mistatements. I tried to be softer in tone since I am not on as close terms with him as you are.

Sprague still worries me and the stuff you sent only reinforces that worry. When you take the founders of Bud committee, you have Jim, Bud, Bill Turner, and Dick. The guy who always comes in with support for the horseship of Turner's is Sprague. You probably can recall that stuff about the Babuska film being in 8Mlps. and at the same time being an intelligence film from the French. As far as Sprague goes, I have always been suspicious but have been well aware of the alternative explanation that he is a strange guy, something which does not, of course, work with Turner. Let's be on our guard. Vince is, although at first he argued with me about the fact that there were some strange things about Dick. There is some in Fred's letter about him.

Your point on Thompson being in to photograph the frames of Life's film was already been discussed by Vince and myself at some lengths. This would be something which could be checked if someone could get a viewer and the proper equipment and examine that film. This possibility shouldn't be overlooked.

In regard to Pat and Bernard being in the back of "Farewell America," when I asked Sprague what names were in there and he read them off, I commented about Pat and Bernard and he said,laughingly that he had asked Bud whether or not there was "something he hadn't let me in on." Bud replied that it was only a coincidence. I asked Bud about the names myself, and he said that they didn't refer to he or his wife. Pass this onto Paul when you write, so that everyone knows that officially and for the record, Bud denies it. Just in case anything comes up in the future.

The P.S. on Newcomb's letter is interesting since you had just mentioned something similar to what Sahl evidently released in strictest confidence in your last letter.

Comments on your memos for Shaw case background:

1. The autopsy doctors: Helpern should not be called as a witness as you point out. His article in Medical Economics, which is his most recent, underlines the points you have made. I agree on the ones you want to call. Although Wecht will not want to do much speculating, I suggest that you ask him if he will be willing to say anything about what little autopsy was done on the brain. He has already (in Tink's book) indicated that it was inadequate, but what he could comment on is the nature of the wounds on the right, which are fairly well described. These suggest a frangible bullet. There is an article in the J. of Forensic Sciences on this subject. That journal is full of articles about the kinds of things which could have been done to find out where the shots came from, what types of bullets, etc. I have a list of all articles on the case in Medical Journals if you are interested, although it would require quite a bit of putting together, since I

made it for the purpose of requesting reprints of all of them. Have you thought about Sibert and O'Neill. There would be problems and dangers, and they might claim executive priviledge, but they would be in a tight spot to lie. I haven't thought the pros and cons of that out carefully.

2. Witnesses: Walther, Rowlands: As you know, I agree on both of these. Walthers breaking down would not hart a bit, and in fact, might help a great deal. I have always liked both she and Rowlands in terms of real concern. Remember the end of Rowland's testimony when Cooper asked him why he hadn't told a copy, and Rowland asked the senator if he had ever had recurring dreams. (This should have been in my newspaper articles but they cut it out when they edited.)

But, the Hughes film which you mention in another memo could detract considerably from Walthers. It was taken only a matter of seconds after she looked away from the window, and at most probably not more than about 1/2 minute. I am not sure that Tink's description of two figures in the windows is not at all correct, and the stuff published in his book could be used by the other side. It is possible that the men were back from the window by then, but those apparent figures are higher than the boxes, and the guy on the left seems to have a trunk and head. I haven't seen the film slowly so I don't know whether there is movement, but this could be checked on.

Carr must be ignored, since he couldn't possibly have seen what he says he saw. He was an incredible distance away to even know if there was someone in those windows, let alone be able to describe them. The prosecution could take a photo from his position and it wouldn't show a thing. I don't know what his game is, but I've never understood why Tink accepted his stuff and assumed it was because of Tink's incredible, driving, neurotic need to find a <u>complete</u> story or solution.

3. Dallas doctors--full agreement. You know more about these guys than anyone does.

If I didn't mention it in my last letter, I am suddenly in trouble in terms of school work. Those important PhD prelimary exams I was worried about in May--well, they are in <u>March</u>. I have two months to cram for all I'm worth. If I get wiped out, and people as smart as I am do, then it will not only hurt academically but mean that I will spend the summer studying. So I am putting out the effort now hoping that it will give me a free summer, besides the other more obvious reasons. I will try to keep the correspondence going.

I spoke to Patsy and hope to have the photos by Friday at which time I will immediately mail them. He is exhausted beyond belief and has been working til 11 every night except Sunday. His wife has barely seen him for a month. He is getting someone else to do them, in fact.

Take care and keep up the good work. I was very impressed when MuMU called Vince on New Years eve--quite a shocker for an old playboy to be working then.

Gary