Feb. 3, 1970

Dear Paul:

Thanks for your letter of Jan. 29. While I agree that your training has undoubtedly given you an ability to evaluate experimental data which is greater than many buffs, I don't feel that your memo or the addendum to it can be offered as proof of that. I feel that the theory testing procedure is flawed and that your paper was flawed. The experiment was interesting and it is good to have a demonstration of the phenomenon which most of us who had thought of it had only speculated on--that an object can move in that direction when hit from behind. But I still take issue with your major conclusions and the bent of the paper. Not because it is pro-commission, but because it is poorly reasoned. And, while hesitating at redundancy, I like everyone else feel that your memo was unlike any you had ever written, not because we disagreed with it (since after all, it was not the first thing that all those people disagreed with at least in part), or because it was pro-commission per se, but because it drew conclusions without adequate evidence. You are the one critic who has always, in my experience, understated his case, so it was an even greater surprise. Whether or not you accept the independent judgments of so many people or any hypothesis of mine that you are re-evaluating your life's many aspects is another issue. We each tend to see ourselves as continuous, unchanging, and consistent beoasue we know ourselves from the inside. I have personally found that it is the observations of others which have helped me to gain insight into changes in myself because they could only judge by the external--that is to say, my behavior. They knew little of what is inside.

In other words Paul, I do grant your intelligence and powers of logic. So does everyone else. That is why your memo was hard to understand. Anti-commission stance is not important, since I personally feel that they were often right, although sometimes purely by accident. Furthermore, I do feel that sometimes the critics (including myself) have oversimplified things while grinding an ax. For instance, I strongly disagreed with much Tink did in terms of answering all those questions such as the neck wound, bullet 399, etc.

I think I do understand your position with regard to not wanting to get involved in arguments, but think that your use of the modifier "little" is not too appropriate. You did present a memo which contained a statement of your views and which theoretically might either be published or shown to others. It contained some big conclusions about big things in the case, which were both questionable in our eyes and of possible political consequence#. The discussion of these things inevitably led to the multifaceted details of this case, and a great many of them at that. And thus many arguments on small details. But these are no different than the arguments and questions we raised concerning the WR. In fact, you yourself raised many of this sort and often did microanalyses. My negative reaction to such arguments is simply that they deal with "old" material and are thus not as interesting as probing new areas and (hopefully) making new discoveries. And, let's face it, arguments are no fun no matter what type they are. Even with the little time I have I am interested in looking at some of those new archives documents. I guess this thing will always be a bit in my blood. My own dislike of arguing the "old" facts is most likely the reason I just never finished my memo on the headhit or those other old pieces of work I did and never have written up. I have promised countless memos that I have never managed to do. I guess much of the interest was in the doing (i.e. my Dallas interviews) rather than the writing it all down.

On Lifton, I offered time and time again to help him polish any manuscript, and when he didn't trust me suggested you, Sylvia, and Mary. I said from the beginning that all I wanted to do was help because I felt we owed that to each other. (Federal agencies worked together better than we have.) My feelings afterward were these: 1. I was exhausted### from being attacked and scrutinized and defending myself in incredibly trivial arguments 2. I had not been able to help because of Dave's distrust and excessive attempts to impress me as to what he had, plus attempts to pump me for Harold's stuff 3. I had aided him in his avoidance of getting the book done just by being in touch, giving him archives documents, etc. (he said that the book was done years ago, promised it to Vince with absolute proof prior to the Democratic Convention of 1967, and then countless other times, including ones in which I had to send things airmail in order to beat publication datelines) For all of his work, full time, and not having school or occupation, he has produced almost nothing (according to Mary who has seen it) save for one or two items which he has held in secret for years but has amassed an incredible storehouse of everyone else's work. This would be OK with me except I don't think he's ever going to publish in #our lifetime and we are going to miss out on his one or two gems which I understand are really significant. I can emphathize with his desires to be rich and famous (he has stated them directly to me) and others) and wouldn't deny him that, but just wish he'd hurry. Giving him more stuff just aids the delay.

Your statement as to what our work has accomplished I agree with. And, you are perceptive in your statements about my feelings about Lane and Garrison. Garrison I excused because I had been led to believe that he had a case and figured that only an unusual person would be on our side against those odds anyway. He was the greatest frustration in a sense. Epstein, Lane, Turner (who I think I was angry about before anyone--I think that Hal thought I was a nut when I first questioned his stuff) and even Lifton's paper mache grassy knoll have been a great source of frustration. But my speaking on this has been very rewarding in terms of friendships and converts, many of whom are now actively working for other good causes (i.e. Dean of the Mitchell School of Law is now challenging the Mpls Bar Assoc).

Well, this has gotten long-winded. Whether it be physics or the cass or jazz, it sounds like you're doing what you enjoy. I'm similarly