

Dear Les,

8/12/86

It now seems like ages ago when I wrote the enclosed letter. Not long after it got shuffled into the awful stack on my desk I had prostate surgery. It was followed by still another thrombosis (how many I've survived!) which left me more limited and until now I'd entirely forgotten that I'd written this letter. I'm now engaged in cleaning up my desk and small office so that I can find room for the papers I will need in defending myself before the appeals court. As I indicate I expected in this letter, the fink judge flailed his rubber stamp and ignored all the evidence that remains entirely undamppted. They don't even deny that they got this judgement against me in their campaign against FOIA by fraud, perjury and misrepresentation. What a crowd!

As so often happens when I rush and try to inform in detail, I went into too much and made it seem more complicated than it is. I'll try to simplify.

Leo Harvey Oswald, the supposed red, is actually a Marine so highly ~~trusted~~ trusted that he had top secret and crypto clearances. He had no overseas assignments as a Marine that were not connected with CIA operations. He pretends to defect to the USSR, after getting hastily discharged about six weeks before it was due, and is suspected by the KGB of being an American sleeper agent. The man in charge of those KGB records defects to the US, where initially the CIA made up a series of phony reasons not to trust him. But he was trusted by the CIA in Washington until it got copies of the FBI's Nosenko interviews in which Nosenko reported that the KGB suspected Oswald and that it knew Oswald was anti-Soviet. Then Nosenko is hidden and greatly abused by the CIA. Although Nosenko has offered to testify to the Warren Commission and the FBI relays that offer, the CIA (Helms personally and others) talk the Commission out of even listening to Nosenko. So, we have the official candidate as presidential assassin with such high clearances, kept secret, such CIA connections, also kept secret, and the KGB bay is almost assassinated by the CIA, which did consider that and driging him crazy so he could not talk. I hope this is simple enough. You'll find more details in the delayed letter.

I still find it difficult to accept that in this country, with our supposedly free and independent press, there is no news interest in documented, undeniable and serious official felonies documented in the federal courts, which ignore the proofs of felonious misconduct and instead reward the felons by decisions that are hurtful to an old and ailing man who has dedicated more than two decades to an enormous and factually unassailable pro bono investigation of the most subversive of crimes and in the course of this are about to gut the law that says the people are entitled to know what their government does. In the USSR they know their press speaks for the government. Here we think it is free and honest. It isn't. It finks for the government. I sent the pleadings of both sides to about 30, including some pretty raunchy FBI records never published, and there wasn't a single interest. I don't think it would make any difference if I could get to Washington. What a commentary on us and our press. And government.

I hope your work is going well and that you are well, and happy, too.

Best,
H/d

Les Witten
114 Eastmor Drive
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10/2/85

Dear Les,

No argument, first things first, and your novel is first. I'm not certain about what I wrote you but of the three Nosenko stories I can see I think it is the simplest one, that he recruited American tourists and correspondents and the records disclosed by the FBI do not include any interest in this by it or the CIA. In this day of spy story and defection after spy story and defection, even history is topical, and how remarkable it is that from its own records the FBI didn't ask a single question of the KGB official who recruited them about those he recruited.

As soon as I read that record I phoned George Gardner, who was off on a story. It was several days before he could call back. He had some interest, said he would speak to his desk, and that he'd want to look at the entire file to be certain, which is true. So, I've kept it out awaiting his call. I am inclined to believe that for his desk such a story in general and with Nosenko involvement or mine will be a nono.

What would probably be too old for the column and possibly more complicated than Jack would prefer (although I could condense it into a graf or two) is also remarkable and extraordinarily suggestive. In its simplest form although part of the CIA started trying to discredit him immediately, in not much more than a week he was in the US, offered political assylum and was treated like a prince. Even with a good salary for that time. Then the FBI sent the CIA copies of its reports of its interviews with him. He told the FBI that the KGB regarded Oswald as a possible American agent in place or a "sleeper" and immediately Nosenko was treated as inhumanly as I've ever heard of anyone being treated in this country, and for three years, during which nobody outside the CIA ever saw him. With Oswald the only official candidate for assassin, and he was elected unanimously, and the suspicions from the first that Oswald had had some kind of spook connection, the one man who could give any credence to that report/suspicion, Nosenko, was sequestered in a box and abused in every possible way. Angleton's USSR desk considered driving him crazy and assassinating him, all on baseless suspicion of its own creation and not existing in any disclosed record I've seen, not mentioned to the best of my knowledge anywhere for 15 years when the CIA offered House assassins committee its explanations.

I'm going into detail not in the expectation of a Jack column but to inform you and have a record for myself in the event of any later interest. I'll keep a copy on my desk is a special Oswald file I have with what I, perhaps alone, regard as a major and an important story, his actual Marines career and high security clearances not in the Warren Commission, FBI or Navy files as such or on his personnel record.

Nosenko first contacted the CIA in 1962. He approached it again in Geneva 1/23/64 when he was, at least officially, a delegate to the disarmament conference. He then wanted to defect and in the end he had to create a seeming crisis to get the CIA to agree. Immediately someone in the CIA created a suspicion that can't survive any consideration of it, that he was a "plant" to embarrass the US at that conference in a KGB scheme in which it would claim that we were interfering with their delegation.

This is plain nuts. After the CIA taped its interviews with him, as it did, such an effort by the USSR would have kicked back and seriously embarrassed it. And there is no reason not to believe that the CIA as well as the KGB understood this. It could, in addition, have produced him at a press conference. In fact before two weeks passed the Russians were offered access to him.

When this silly CIA fabrication vaporized with the end of the conference the CIA made a new one up, that he was a "plant" to confuse Western intelligence. The nature of the information he provided in itself destroys that crazy invention, as the CIA's only HSCA witness testified to at some length. One of the things is obvious. That CIA witness, John L. Hart, testified that Nosenko told the CIA where some 40-50

KGB bugs were hidden in our embassy. Neither this nor the other significant information he provided is "throw away" stuff from the KGB. It is and was such solid stuff that since the nuts in the CIA were ousted, as they were, Nosenko has been a consultant and an instructor in KGB intelligence methods and practises under his new identity. He may be the greatest of dependable U.S. sources on the KGB.

In the records I've just gotten is a casual FBI remark that it does not necessarily believe the then current CIA story to discredit Nosenko.

Nosenko, on his part, offered to testify before the Warren Commission and there was a major CIA effort, successful, to talk the Commission out of it. One of the Commission executive sessions I had to sue to get, and got only the very day the CIA's brief was due at the appeals court, is pretty hairy, with our to-be first unelected President, already a secret informer for the FBI, virtually threatening the other members in his successful effort to get it to ignore Nosenko, which is *what* ~~was~~ the CIA was pressing on it. It is, I think, obvious, that normally an investigative body would first hear a witness of credentials it may have doubted and then checked and evaluated his story. With any kind of investigation, establishing a basis for crediting what Nosenko said was simple. I'll get to whether or not ~~he~~ ^{Oswald} might have had any spook connection, what Nosenko said the KGB suspected, separately.

Nosenko said that he was first in charge of a section that recruited U.S. and British tourists and correspondents, of whom only Sam Jaffe's name is in what I've just gotten. At the time of Oswald's phony defection, ^{that} ~~that~~ was directly under Nosenko. The FBI records have enough on this. I don't know what the CIA has or had, ~~that~~ ^{but} much has disappeared and the rest is undisclosed.

One of the alleged basis for CIA suspicion about ~~Nosenko~~ Nosenko's story, and this impressed me enough to make me forget and make a mistake in what I wrote you earlier, is that the KGB failed to interview Oswald. The mistake I made in recollection is that Oswald himself told the FBI that he'd been interviewed by the MVD twice and, incredibly, the FBI agents never went into any detail on this with him. This is in the card summary I sent you from FBI records that apparently are of a damage-assessment nature, of the time of the House investigation. They were disclosed to Mark Allen, whose request relates to what the FBI let that committee have. What Nosenko told the CIA, according to these FBI records, is precisely what ^I told you would be normal, that the KGB learned all it needed to know about Oswald from the Intourist interpreter (I told you it would have been the guide) and the employees of the hotel for foreigners in Moscow. They all decided that Oswald was unstable and for that reason a) ~~they~~ ^{they} had no interest in him and b) wanted him out of ~~the~~ the USSR. This is as reasonable as anything can be. And who can doubt that Intourist and the hotel for foreigners people are KGB or inform for it? This decision was recommended by Nosenko's subordinate in charge of ~~that~~ ^{that} and in the end he and Nosenko recommended it jointly.

When Oswald's name was first mentioned in the JFK assassination and the KGB records in Moscow were scanty or nonexistent, Nosenko was in charge, having been promoted to chief of that section, and he sent KGB investigators to Minsk to get the records there and to investigate. Their investigation showed that when the Oswalds were to leave for the US, Marina's uncle, a forestry official in the equivalent of our Interior Department and certainly a party functionary (with the rank equivalent to colonel) tried to persuade Oswald not to be outspokenly anti-Soviet when he was back in the U.S.

This, of course, presented a problem to the official story of our government, that Oswald was dedicatedly red. But there are his secret writings, some of which the Commission published, and there is what its testimony from those who knew him in the ^{Marines} had to say. Oswald was an Orwellian and he was anti-Soviet and anti-U.S. Communist. He wrote that the Russians "are fat stinking politicians" and that the Communist Party USA "has betrayed the working class." He broke off from a ^{Marine's} friend who red-baited him and thereafter had nothing to do with him, and the illiterate ^{Marines}, who hadn't heard of Orwell, knew that "Animal Farm" was Oswald's

favorite book. (One, Nelson Delgado, though it was a Communist book but the Commission's lawyer, of the right, Wesley Liebel, told him that, and this is in the published testimony, "Animal Farm" is an anti-Communist classic.

Not long after the assassination there were a few stories indicating that Oswald had worked for the FBI. These were entirely ignored by the Commission until after the middle of January 1964 it got a phone call from the Texas court of inquiry people saying that they had heard this story, published a month earlier, known to the Commission and the FBI then. There then was Commission panic, three executive sessions in a few days, plus hearing the Texas people in secrecy and without any stenographic transcript in between sessions. (Ford stole one, edited it, sold it for a profit and then lied under oath when he was questioned at the v.p. confirmation hearing.) The official story is that Oswald was an FBI informer with the number or voucher number S-279, from memory, close but maybe not 100%.

So, in the end there was Hoover's denial that Oswald had been his informer or that he'd had any such number, *and nothing else.*

This business involves a right-wing reporter who has since become my friend, Lonnie Hudkins, covering Dallas for a Houston paper. He told me that he and others were being hassled by the FBI, they suspected wiretapped, so he made up a story to which the others (one currently assistant US Attorney in Dallas and a right-wing extremist) agreed, and they talked about it by phone. He told me that within a half-hour the FBI visited all of them. I have no confirmation.

But that the number was made up I have twice confirmed, in terms of the correct number, not characteristic of the FBI's at all but entirely consistent with the numbering system used by the CIA. I have confirmation and the correct number from a little-known Commission record and, when later there was renewed interest in this, I boggytrapped Lonnie by priming a reporter, and in the course of that conversation Lonnie remembered a major part of the correct, six-digit, no letter number. I've never bugged Lonnie about his source, knowing he could not disclose it. He'd left Houston, was in Baltimore and is now in Buffalo. He and his wife and son came here frequently when he was with Hearst in Baltimore.

That I have the correct number from a commission record establishes that it did not investigate it at all and stayed with what it knew was a fake and an entirely meaningless Hoover denial, based on a wrong identification in any event.

That they never intended to investigate is established by the executive session transcripts I have, particularly the first, which ends with Dulles recommending that all records of it be destroyed. This was agreed to, but they overlooked one thing, the stenotypists tape. When I located it and was about to sue it was transcribed for me.

Dulles let his hair down then. He told the other members that the CIA would lie and that its lying was right and proper. He said that who it had informers only two people knew about it and the records were in hieroglyphics only these two would understand and they'd tell nobody, etc.

So, on this basis alone there was reason to go farthur, even if with doubts, for the investigation to be an investigation, for honesty and integrity, and because above all the crime was the most subversive of crimes, the assassination of a President. That hullifies our system and it becomes, in effect, a coup d'etat, too. But despite its failure to investigate, by accident the Commission learned much more bearing on all of this. In addition, I've gotten relevant records by back-door use of FOIA when the front door was firmly locked.

Delgado and another nutty Marine led the prosecution-minded (as distinguished from investigation-minded) Commission lawyers that Oswald had killed a fellow Marine, Martin Schrand. The Commission types just loved this because that could establish what was entirely missing, an Oswald proclivity for violence. (In the end they made one up, claiming that he had shot at General Walker, who was shot at with a rifle bullet too large for Oswald's rifle, but as long as he'd been shot at the ballistics evidence was ignored and misrepresented.) When I never saw the results of this in the Commission's record and failed to get anything about Oswald

*transcript,
2/12/64,*

through any request of the Navy (you may remember that I gave you the proof that the Army had destroyed all its JFK assassination records and you used it in a column years ago), I made a different request, without mention of Oswald. I asked for the court martial inquiry into Schrand's death - and got it. A little background first.

Immediately upon the assassination the FBI examined Oswald's personnel records. Its report makes no reference to any security clearance and says it includes all that is of any significance. A record that I'd have thought would have been there but perhaps wasn't is an earlier cable from the Navy chief of staff to the Moscow embassy at the time of Oswald's supposed defection. It says that while the records do not include any security clearances Oswald might have been cleared for confidential. Later, to the Commission, the Navy produced records reflecting that Oswald got this confidential clearance when he completed basic radar training at Jacksonville. No Navy record indicates any other clearance-or cancellation of any. However, from Jacksonville, with four others, he went to Keesler Field, near Mobile, for advanced training. One of the others was Schrand, who remained with Oswald in the Marines until he killed himself. Only a reference to Oswald's grades and performance (good) at Keesler has been disclosed and it is said that no other records exist.

Now I jump ahead to a trip I made to California in mid-December 1966 to promote my second book. I'm doing a talk show in Oakland, it is almost over, I've been talking about, among other things, what the official description of Oswald is, and a guy calls but won't talk to me on the air. He won't leave a number because he is ~~now~~ successful in business and fears going public. I promised him confidentiality and while I could have identified and located him from what he told me, I kept my word. He tells me things about Oswald not in the official descriptions and I am able to check them out and he was truthful. The main thing he said is that Oswald was one of only five men in their outfit, and I gathered my source was not one of them, who had "crypto" clearance. I'd never heard of that and I do not believe it existed when I was in intelligence. But I checked it out, it is real, and top secret clearance is prerequisite for crypto. As I also checked out the Commission's records and testimony I found a vast amount of confirmation for this, without reference to crypto. There were five men with special training and duties, with Oswald, according to his boss, having many important secrets and "at least secret" clearance. There is testimony from one of these Marines that he and Oswald had been assigned to Operation Strong Back, in the Commission's transcript. But none of this is in any Navy Oswald record and is not on his personnel record. It reflects overseas assignment to Atsugi air base, which was used by the CIA for its U-2s based in Japan, and several assignments to "maneuvers" only, and an assignment to the Philippines. I went over these records with care when I got back from the coast after this man had phoned me and there was more than adequate confirmation.

I get the Schrand inquest records, Schrand serving with Oswald from the time both reached Jacksonville for their basic radar training and there is a brief account of that unit's immediately prior assignments. Yup, Strongback, and they are back from it with their carrier, which is in Cubi Bay, with their "crypto van" removed from the carrier and at Cubi Point. (Which happens to have been also a CIA base.) To even get into the crypto van crypto clearance was required. Oswald, Schrand and the other three. So, Oswald had both top secret and crypto clearances, never cancelled in the records that exist and do not reflect granting of these clearances either, and the officer under who Oswald performed his duties swore that he'd had to have at least secret clearance for those duties.

I don't recall how I knew it in the late 60s, but I recall that there is reason to believe that Oswald was part of two acknowledged CIA operations against Sukarno/Indonesia, and I'm pretty certain that Strongback was one. I think from a phone call from a woman who said her husband was part of it that the other was Haylift. I am certain that she said her husband was in Haylift and that Haylift was against Sukarno.

So, prior to his "defection" to the USSR, where the KGB suspected that he might be an American "sleeper" agent, we have Oswald with the highest Marines security clearances, also getting red literature openly in the mails as a Marine and learning Russian as a Marine, with no record of that, either, trusted with significant military secrets, too, secret codes and detailed knowledge of procedures, practices and methods and of new equipment, like then very new height-secret radar, and without any "Marines overseas assignment not connected with the CIA and hidden in his personnel records. And when he is accused of assassinating no less than a President and there are official investigations, all of this is ignored, withheld from the people and the world.

At this point I was interrupted with something that may interest you but ~~it is for you~~ it is for you alone, and I've lost my train of thought so after reporting this I'll read what I've written and try and pick it up.

I work with all kinds of people and disagree with most but what I know and what I have is available to all. Most of those with whom I disagree are rather nice and mostly good people and some of the nicest are the nuttiest. With the extreme right, too, and one of those who is pertinent in what follows, without asking me, tried to talk his pal H.L. Hunt into hiring me. Later and independently, the old man actually did ask me to be his ghost writer. This guy, Jack White, is part-owner and photographic expert for a Fort Worth advertising agency. He has an associate connected with a Fort Worth TV station, Gary Mack, who just phoned me. Some years ago White did some spectacular work on a Polaroid of JFK being killed taken by a then schoolteacher then Mary Moorman, since remarried. Many people had worked on it because the background includes the grassy knoll. White can up with an enlargement of a pinpoint in the original that clearly shows a man there. No, I am not saying and I do not believe that a man there means an assassin there. But this, too, despite all the reports of shots coming from there and even the House investigation, which concluded that there was a shot from there, is work that was never done *officially*.

It happens that a younger friend of ours was the committee's photographic expert. We are the godparents of his first child and whenever he is 50-75 miles away he visits us. The photographic work he did for me on the Zapruder film is the basis of getting that House investigation. When he was here a couple of months ago and was talking of the work still to be done on the Moorman picture, computer enhancement for Gary Mack's TV station, I remembered that in the 60s I'd gotten an 8x10 proof and he wondered if it could be of better quality than what he'd seen and worked on. When he saw it he was excited. Better contrast, better in some parts of the spectrum, etc., and I let him have it. The original processing of the negatives he made was with the chemicals at the wrong temperature so it is being repeated under close controls to eliminate that and it is to be computer enhanced for the TV station by the Jet Propulsion Lab. The report was to tell me that 36 ~~at~~ different points on that copy of the Polaroid have been enlarged and are now awaiting processing on a personal basis by an old friend of Jack White, who will be careful. Remember the stories of the time of the assassination of a puff of smoke on the knoll. Mack tells me that in the photo I loaned them it is almost three-dimensional. So, in time, there may be photographic proof indicating that there was a conspiracy and more than one shooter when JFK was ~~assassinated~~ assassinated - and the FBI had this picture and did nothing with it, not even with all those reports of people on and shots from that knoll. (I am without doubt that at least one shot was from the front and the original doctors are my source.)

Jesus, here we have Oswald allegedly the lone Presidential assassin, he has a record in the Marines and with the CIA that is totally obfuscated and really hidden, without any financing or support I can get all of this together, and all those official investigators couldn't? Or what is so much worse, so dangerous to the nation, merely wouldn't? Who in the hell can ever be safe, what President dares make a decision he thinks can be unpopular, and how in the hell can any society

really function, really be free, and who can be really free when these institutions decided to do something like this covering up?

On ~~this~~ ^{the litigation,} I've still not heard a word from the judge who usually acts against me almost overnight. I've filed formal charges against the FBI and the Department of Justice, alleging fraud, perjury and misrepresentation, and they have not even denied it when they responded. I've made formal complaint to DJ's (ugh) Office of Professional Responsibility, which is really its whitewashing component and right now is handling the Cleveland grand jury in looking at the FBI's wrongdoing in the Jackie Presser case. I've made formal complaint to the United States Attorney for D.C., and he hasn't even acknowledged my letter. (Nor has OPR.) I've also told di Genova that he has to recuse himself because he signed the papers that make him party to these felonies. I suppose they are all putting heads together, and I fully expect this rotten judge to do such a wrong thing, to see what they can come up with. But by now they know I'm not afraid and I think they are afraid for the new focus on their felonies to be the issue on appeal. They certainly know that I'll go up on appeal and despite the Reorganizing of the courts, there is some possibility that there can be a judge who just won't sit still for official felonies when they are the central issue. Meanwhile, I'm not a bit worried.

If when I read this I think of nothing else, I think that the failure of the records to reflect any FBI or CIA interest in knowing which Americans Nosenko recruited for the KGB is what I had in mind. The rest tells you more for, perhaps, the future, because I do not think any of the papers would be interested. I wish Jack and a dependable kid because certainly your novel does take precedence.

I don't know any magazine that'd be interested, either.

Thanks and best wishes,

Hal