

11/22/69

Dear Dick,

Re 17, cigars, again thanks. In what denominations do you want stamps?

Finck; (and take in the cryptic dropping of the "c"): greed with this exception- he faces the possibility of jail (as also does James), with this difference: his perjury was committed in a jurisdiction outside DC. My reading of his testimony gave me a reading of him. There are, as you know, all kinds of snakes. Some wriggle directly ahead; others go sideways. I welcome his babbling in an effort to evade, for he bribes bits this way. Nobody can entirely avoid it. My intent is all three, but James presents the problems of costs I cannot meet. Bud and I have discussed this at some length and are in complete agreement on all aspects. I think you'll approve what we have in mind. I wish I could tell you all I have by way of the warmest greetings.

2 film; You misunderstood. I told Howard I'm hopeful of getting 35mm of entire thing, that when I do I'll have an artist project and trace these frames, and, as I showed him by the books and a ruler, they inevitably will show the forward and downward movement. If this does not come to pass as I anticipate, I will ask you to make some for me in the future. Do not make any now, until we see if I can get these done, as I've been promised.

Double head-hit: It is not that I say this is impossible, it is that I remain unpersuaded, and little as I know of physics, I'm inclined to believe a really enormous force would be required to counteract the forward force just exerted under this theory. I am not wedded to disbelief; I'm just not convinced.

Raffa now again agreed. He is a very bright young man, as bright as any I've met for his years, probably brighter, and with an excellent, scholarly approach and in many ways better prepared for some stress than others of us. I tried to treat him as an equal, and I was open with him. Perhaps part of it is his self-confidence versus the undreamed-of things of which he became aware for the first time. But I'm glad he feels this way. I think he'll do better with Specter than, for example, Lane would or Salendris did, for a number of reasons, none of which is adverse reflection on Vince (who was Ponti's brains). We have gone over this carefully, agree on an approach, and in order to be certain he understood and to be able to really chew it over, he taped it. He will not try and booby-trap Specter, will not undertake to deceive him in any way, will begin by asking Specter to state his case without such interruptions as he face on TV and US News interviews, and will then ask certain specific questions for which he is not much better prepared than now was before. He will not seek to covert or embarrass, will merely seek fact and some explanations, at the end some reconciliations.

Bottom: without knowing it, I've wondered whether the fibres would twist around a bullet, but I decided that if they did they could have been and were removed. I've also wondered about certain plastics, and I was aware that Nichols used mattresses. The thing of which I have never had any doubt is that in some fashion this is exactly what was done. It therefore is less important to me now. Brazier's testimony, which I cite in 10, was enough for me.

As I wrote you, I've finished my Finck H.C. analysis but want to re-read and correct before sending out, and there are other, significant things that now show me under. I hope you can omit nothing, for there is always the chance you'll spot what I haven't. Howard, for example, sent me Ken's testimony on the anterior neck wound which fits my needs perfectly, and it had been so long since I read it I'd entirely forgotten it.

McCrae never answered. Put man report on citing. Best,

17 Nov 69

Harold:

Correspondence is piling up and I want to get it out of the way before I finish the report on Dempsey interview or a letter re Finck's N.O. testimony. A mass of term papers recently came my way, and they have crowded other things out of my free time.

Cigars: Glad you like them. I'll send more when I can. If you are happy to receive a package of five every now and then when I can get someone to mail them in the States, then let them be my treat to you. The cost would not be a burden, and I would enjoy sending you something that you enjoy.

If you want me to send a large supply, then I shall have to have payment for them. If so, send \$1 for each package of five that you want. Don't send money for the packages that I send individually on my own initiative, for I would like to treat.

I do need American stamps, though, for they have to be carried into the States and mailed from there; Canadian stamps are no good for that. I anticipate some friends or myself going over the border on Sundays for shooting matches in Watertown, and stamps will not be available for purchase. Send about 50 cents ~~with~~ worth; that should be enough for a while at least.

Archives CE 399 base picture: Your picture has not yet arrived from Archives. As you suggested, I recently wrote and asked them to rush it. If I can locate it, I'll include a copy of the letter with this.

Finck's N.O. testimony: I'll send you a letter dealing specifically with this. In general I agree with your general assessment on his evasions-- "answers" that are not answers, time-wasting, and all else that indicates that he knows what he is hiding. Given a choice, I would go after Humes as the more likely to crumble under fair questioning. Finck is a snake, and should be chopped up, too, but I'll bet Humes is weaker, and probably knows more, at least in terms of direct (not heresay) knowledge.

Frazier's testimony: O.K. on what you say about spectro. I did not read the passage carefully enough. "Same" does not mean "same", and "identical" is not "identical". We're on the verge of 1984; God help us.

The reason that trajectory problems never bothered me is that nothing can be proved by them. I never assume straight trajectory through bodies. Trajectory is predictable only in air; one a bullet enters a body, strange things can and often do happen. The importance of the reconstruction, as you correctly indicate, is not what it tells us about the assassination (for I think it can tell us little), but what it tells about the investigators of the assassination.

Scope sight and shims: I'll write to Mary Ferrell and try to learn more. Later I shall have more to say of this concerning my belief that the rifle was sighted on a high trajectory even at the time of the shooting (this remark does not suggest that the rifle was used in the shooting-- I still think that it was not.)

Z film: A reference in your letter to Roffman indicates you may be expecting slides of the area around Z291. I have no

present plans for making more slides for you, I do not recall your request for these, so if you want them, please repeat the request. Tell me precisely what frames you want.

Miami Herald photo: Don't bother too much about this on my account. It would be good to have a good picture of the group, but not worth great effort, I think.

US Navy: Yony 15 Oct letter to "Dick, Gary, Paul" indicates interest in Navy involvement. A Navy corpsman by the name of Mills is one (with SS agent Paterni) who allegedly found one of the large bullet (399-type) ~~in the~~ fragments in the car. I say allegedly because all this info is heresay-- something that makes me prick my ears in suspicion. Neither Mills nor Paterni were called to testify regarding the finding of the fragments. Specter extracted heresay from witnesses (Kellerman and Frazier, at least) who were unwilling to report heresay. I think there is foolery behind this, but of course can't be sure. I find it easier to believe that those fragments were planted than ~~that the M-C rifle was used in the shooting.~~ ~~that the M-C rifle was used in the shooting.~~

Double head-hit on JFK: I get the impression that you don't go along with this notion. I wish we could speak face to face and go over all the evidence that bears on it, for the evidence of both hits is conclusive, beyond criticism. Gary thinks so, too, and he says he can prove it only on the basis of medical evidence, without reference to the films or other types of evidence. If you disagree, I urge you at least to reserve judgment until we can thrash it out, for I think eventually you will feel that the double hit must be the true situation-- nothing else explains all the phenomena involved.

Roffman: I am so glad now that I stuck with him and did not utterly despair, for he is sharp as a tack. Now that he has gotten of the notion of one gunman, doors of revelation are opening for him left and right. I think he will see things that we have missed. Best of all, he will keep the rest of us in line, for he seems unwilling to take bullshit even from our side. He's been good for me, since he got me thinking anew about old problems that are going to bear importantly on coming events-- like your suit.

He has been busy, and I have not heard much from him recently, but I expect good things.

He was dazzled by you, and I suspect that that is what is keeping him busy. After each trip to you my own mind buzzes for two months with previously unthought thoughts, and I suspect Roffman is going through the same thing. He was already soaring, but you affected him like a booster rocket, so now he's off with his own thoughts for a while.

I am sure he is smart enough to handle Specter, but wonder whether he has the evil wit necessary to wrestle with a boa constrictor. I think that he'll be all right as long as he doesn't try to convert Specter. Well, all we can do is hold our ears and see where his bomb lands. The only "unfriendly" interview of Specter that I know of was by Gaetano Fonzi for the Philadelphia Magazine. It was a good one; Fonzi made Specter squirm.

399 base: I look forward to getting your picture from Archives and seeing what exciting thing you noticed in comparison with Roffman's. It's best that you not tell me until I too see it or (as the case may be) fail to see it. After this long time of waiting, you can imagine that I am ready to climb up the wall over this.

If you think that the difference between the two pictures is relevant, I suggest that you get an official record, preferably from the Archives, of when each picture was taken. I can't urge this as anything but a slight suggestion, for presently I don't know what the difference is, or what it means.

N.O. testimony: Your remark, " There is more than enough to shorten one name by a 'c' " is cryptic in the extreme. If it's important, please explain.

Picture of bullet bases: The picture from which I derived that slide showing the base of 399 shows also the bases of other bullets. There are four base depicted in the whole picture: (1) the bullet that Olivier shot through a goat carcass-- this was squashed at the base like 399; the lead extrudes somewhat from the base, but is not cracked or mangled like 399; (2 and 3) Frazier's two test bullets fired through cotton-- these have round bases, with the lead extruding somewhat; (4) 399. I wrote to Roffman for the number that the Archives assigned to this picture; when he tells me, I'll send it to you.

The relevant information that develops from comparison of these bases is that 399 was not fired into cotton-- perhaps into some other soft material, but not cotton. After seeing these bases I searched for and found an explanation of what prevented deformation in the test bullets fired through cotton, and concluded that 399 could not have been fired into that material. This is the reason why: When a revolving bullet strikes packed cotton fibers, the fibers immediately adhere to the surface of the bullet; fibers adhere to those fibers, and so forth. The result is that the cotton forms a kind of "snowball" of fibers around the bullet as it twists into the batting. As the ball of fibers increasingly forms around the bullet, its resistance increased and it stops in its flight very soon. The bullet itself comes in contact only with the fibers that immediately adhere to it.

I do not know whether other fibers than cotton would have the same effect-- this "snowballing" effect. If not, then a bullet fired into some other fibrous material than cotton might be squashed on the end. Nichols has fired into mattresses, so perhaps he could give some information of this.

"Ballistics for Hunters" chapter: As you guessed, this is from a paperback. I indicated the title and publisher on the copy that I sent to you. I'll try to get you a copy, but it may be out of print.

I'll search for a discussion of the construction and effect of military bullets, but doubt whether any would say much more than is in that chapter that I sent. This will take time, so please sit tight.

Enough for now.

I anticipate sending you a letter re Finck's testimony and more on my interview with Dempsey. As soon as I can, which may not be as soon as I would like.

Dempsey impressed me ~~xxxx~~ as honest and level-headed. His only kink is that he likes to fight and favors the Right. But he is not a kook. He's languishing with his charming and gracious family, and I am sure it is driving him wild with boredom. He needs action badly.

Dempsey said something important that I have not yet pursued, but will. When Earl McRae (Toronto Star) interviewed him, McRae told him that the Toronto police had picked up the "fat man" who contacted Ray in Toronto. McRae did not know who he is, but knew that Toronto police identified him.

I'll write to McRae and try to learn more. This is something McRae learned since I last talked with him.

Still,

Jack

cc. Schoener

12 November 1969

Mr. Mike Simmons
General Services Administration
National Archives and Records Service
Washington, D.C. 20408

Dear Mr. Simmons:

This letter relates to certain evidence in the Warren Commission archive.

Several weeks ago Mr. Harold Weisberg of Frederick, Maryland, instructed the Archives to send me a photograph that the Archives had once taken for him. The photograph shows ~~the~~ a close-up view of the base (the rear end) of the bullet that came into evidence as Commission Exhibit 399.

Although it has been a long time since Mr. Weisberg made that request, I have not yet received the picture from you.

I wish therefore that you would send it to me as quickly as possible, since it is essential for certain research that I am doing.

Mr Weisberg informed me that he had instructed the Archives to deduct the cost of the picture from his personal account.

Please be careful not to make the mistake of sending me any other photograph of the ~~bullet~~ bullet than the one that was taken for Mr. Weisberg. This picture shows an enlarged view of the base of CE 399, and nothing else.

Mr. Weisberg instructed me to write to you personally concerning this matter.

Yours truly,

Richard Bernabei

Richard Bernabei

cc. Harold Weisberg