

7/21/69

Dear Dick,

I laid your letter of 7/11 aside for some reason but do not recall it. I am under the impression I did respond.

Please do not go to any special effort on the Havana cigars. I really do not need any. This reminds me, I have finally gotten a copy of Castro's speech of 11/25/63. It is now being copied and translated. A gasty galnce entirely confirms what I reported in O in NO. I want to see if there is in it what I did not then learn. It is possible other similar things may soon be available to me.

I wrote the Archives for the weight of 399 as certified by them or in a picture of it on a scale. I buy your hunch, think it important, No response. In this directio, however, I have taken two moves. I've asked my Senator to inquire into the unseemly delays and I've persuaded Bud I am now prepared for and the time has come for a few legal moves. I see him on this tomorrow

My immediate forearm's interest is in the 30.06 and its rraction to a firm rest. I no longer need the results of firing into a mock-up, for I have the actual results, almost exactlt what we had anticipated.

Sneyd: your BEA and Dawnay's letters plus what I had are enough. I think we have everything here we can expect to be credited, everything short of the result of an unusual break or an official action. My writing is well past that point now.

I have not heard from Deating. I had intended writing McRae but haven't had time. I wrote here c/o him. My concern is not with writers who are willing for the heavens to fall but with those who let justice be done. Is there anything to that fat-men stuff other than what Blair said?

I've had another spell of whatever it is, this one more severe but observed by a different doctor. He saus it is an anxiety reaction accompanied with hyper-ventillation. That surprises me, yet I find it more credible than the first diagnosis. I have not felt tense, tied up. I have felt more relaxed, not rushed. But perhaps the frustration is deeper than I thought. Before it happened I had asked our medical coop for a complete check and they responded with an appointment for tomorrow with a doctor who will decide. I think that whatever I understand I can handle. If this is a correct diagnosis, It does not worry me, though I suppose the fact of the condition will until I fully comprehend it.

If you recall some time ago you made a short trip and then recommended that I send copies of my books to a man you saw. Neither you nor I have heard from him since. It is not now necessary, for I have accomplished the ~~same~~ thing by different means.

Bud loaned me his Ray clippings. In some areas they are good, in others very inadequate, but they are helpful. I must get back to them and be prepared to add what I can from them. he has little from England, for example.

John phoned before he got to Archives, not afterward. I told him how to reach Bud, have heard from neither since.

Best,

11 July 69

Harold:

I just got yours of 7 July.

I'll keep my eyes open for Havana cigars, and if I get any will smuggle some to you from time to time. We can get them here, but you usually have to wait until there is a supply in town. I can't pass them across the border through the mail, but now and then friends go into the States and I can have them mailed to you from there.

Weight of 399: I considered it a wild guess that 399 now weighs 158.6, for the usual practice of firearms examiners is (1) to collect and examine residues, ~~(2) to clean and weigh the bullet~~, ~~(3) to take samples for spectro analysis~~ (2) to clean and weigh the bullet, (3) to compare microscopic marks of evidence and tests until a definite determination is reached, (4) to take photographs-- this may be done at all stages (4) to collect specimen for spectro analysis. I am pretty sure of that order, but not certain.

The authoritative book on firearms identification is by Hatcher, Jury, and Weller, but I have not seen it yet. I thought I had ordered it through interlibrary loan, but it has not arrived after a long time, and I think I may have overlooked ordering it because I intended to buy it. I am almost certain that it will give me more leads in tracking down Frazier's tricks. I plan to order it at the beginning of next month, when I have some money.

Sneyd in London: I have not done anything recently, and have no plans for doing more. All of my contact was with Dawnay, who has opted out and will be doing no more leg work.

Claire Keating and Blanch van Lueven: I wrote to McRae for their addresses. If I get them, I'll follow up as best I can.

I do not know the date of McRae's Toronto Star articles.

McRae is interested in Canadian angles, ~~and~~ will track good stories, and will write rust caelum ("let the heavens fall", for you non-Latinist crumbs) stuff. He did a magnificent piece on Giesbrecht of Winnipeg and great stuff with the "fat man" who gave Ray an envelope in Toronto, and with the Toronto witnesses.

I would like to give McRae whatever I can, so if you have stuff that I can pass to him, whole stories or good leads, please let me know. The Toronto Star stands in the best tradition of reporting (what we think reporting should be, not what it is in the States), and McRae is among the best of their staff reporters.

Lifton: I heed all of your caution. Will continue playing cool and ignorant.

My feelings: Not despondent, not discouraged. Breathless at my good fortune in finding I was wrong about one thing, and possibly wrong about the other. It would have been disastrous to have made such accusations with such certainty and to be easily proved wrong by others-- I am truly happy that I escaped that. I consider that the business about the shoulder dents is hanging fire, that there is not much more we can do until Nichols or somebody gets the rifle and cartridges into our possession. The shoulder dents are characteristic of chambering marks that I have seen produced by other rifles when fully bulletted cartridges are introduced into the chamber. But C2766 is a wierdo rifle, and I am watching for uncharacteristic things. We produced good scrapes on the case shoulders with your rifle, and that tends to support the notion that the shoulder dents were produced in the same way, but with

this strange rifle such an indication might be a deception.

Roffman has written to Hoover and got answers (e.g. that the weights Frazier gave for bullets were taken from unfired bullets, something not clear in Frazier's testimony). Maybe I'll have Roffman ask Hoover what caused the shoulder dents; you can't ask for better authority than that, can you?

By the way, Roffman sent me a photo showing that there is also a shoulder dent on CE 543-- not pronounced, but definitely there. That puts some sort of mark on the shoulders of all the cases known to have been in that rifle.

Later I am going to send you and Nichols specially prepared cases that I want you to chamber in a certain way. As I ~~xxx~~ said before, I think I can settle the question of the three unexplained sets of marks on the base of CE 543. In checking the record I find that it is the only thing that the WR relies on for the assertion that the cases give evidence of practice at working the bolt fast (except Marina's testimony, which does not involve ammunition anyway). Joseph Nichol will come up smelling like a lily, for he really did do the best he could with those marks. The FBI less so; except that they are supposed to be experts, their failure to explain the marks is mildly understandable. Eisenberg comes off badly, for he made Nicol speculate that the marks could represent multiple loading. The fact is that Nicol was completely confused because he did not know the unusual operation of the rifle. He even guessed (a valid guess in light of his limited knowledge of the rifle-- valid, but wrong) that the marks ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ might have been caused by another rifle (ignored in the WR).

I wish that I had time to do really comprehensive work on the firearms angle. I'd like to go through the whole record again, collecting and sorting and studying all references and all aspects of the firearms angle. But it is more than I can bear right now. Hopefully, with enough pot shots we'll land one in a vital spot and really kill the beast. I thought I had 'em cold with my work on the dents. I'm down from the mountain, but still slogging along in the muck.

Be careful of your health. If you get good sleep and proper exercise you will find you can do as much (and better) than if you try to work when you are tired.

Go fishing. I'll tell you a great spot. You see, there's this place in Rome, on the Tibur River, right between the two bridges, where.....

Still,

*Bernabei*

Bernabei