

2/28/89

Dear Dave,

It was exciting to hear that after so long and so great an effort your labors for the Indians are beginning to bear fruit. The university's change in attitude is as encouraging as it is surprising.

I began to read Scheim this morning and it will be my at-home reading for quite a while. His short prologue took me an hour. His first real chapter begins in an unreal way. He flaunts his ignorance of the unquestioned facts of the case. On that page he says that other things and the observations of those present at the autopsy say that the wound was in the shoulder, which it wasn't, that this is confirmed by the Commission's pictures, of which it had none at all, and that Oswald's rifle was found "beside" the window and the shells. *It wasn't.*

With that for openers, the game looks attractive!

His scholarship includes reading all the books he could get on Walter Reuther and ignoring the basic assassination books. He uses Tink Thompson as his authority. But like he does with the Report, of which I am sure, I think he misrepresents what Thompson really wrote. He attributes to the Report, and I've annotated it, what the Report did not say. I think that he, like Davis, got some of that stuff verbally and the had assistants searching for something to cite in footnotes.

I was both tired and amused when I responded to De Santis, enclosed, and I should have rewritten the letter but I used that time for other things. What in the world impels people like him to be so stupid and to besmitch their own reputations? He obviously knows nothing about the assassination or its investigations and he is really puerile in his silliness about what Whitewas was copyrighted.

I don't expect to hear from him and I've no interest in any further correspondence with him. I sent a copy to the editor of Notre Dame Magazine.

I've finished the first two numbered chapters. This character does not even know the geography of Dealey Plaza. He has one underpass, Elm St only going under it, and he has Elm St. turning into Stemmons. He says there was only one steam pipe, along the tracks, and there were at least two because I saw and have pictures of two. And more like this.

Resumed 2 3/5/89. I was interrupted so I mailed what I had in an envelope for you without this, which I was adding to as I read. I'm more than halfway through his text and after a period of wondering whether Scheim is deliberately dishonest or not and deciding not I came to the clincher this morning. Yesterday I began to ~~write~~ write about his contrived Ruby conspiracy. Today I decided to check one of his footnotes out. It is to Maggher. It shocked me. It is enclosed. I think you may want to compare the two for yourself.... Often he has his own words and then one of the superabundant footnotes. When you check them he cites a source only and you have to consult the source to see if he is fair and honest. (Like BBC on Ruby dying from lung cancer, which he didn't!)

This is taking quite a bit of time because I have to hold the book while I write in it and because I am writing so much. I won't do his appendices which in any event are not relevant to the JFK and Oswald killings, only to his nuttiness, which he uses them to pad. But I'll mail this separately because I think you'll enjoy it. I'll return the annotated book when I've finished annotating it.

Best,

Harold

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By the time I'm half-way through the text of Scheim's book I've formed several distinct impressions. One is that he had no interest in the JFK assassination or Ruby's murder of Oswald per se. He didn't even bother to learn the most basic things about them. He knows nothing about Dealey Plaza itself and thus writes incorrectly about such simple things as the streets and the Triple Underpass, which he has as a single bridge. He knows so little about the Oswald killing itself he repeatedly misstates where it happened, saying it was on the "ramp." He knows so little about the circumstances of moving Oswald from the building in which the police had him into the sheriff's custody he was actually shocked over the moving of the car into which he was to have been transported into place. He has not bothered even to learn what is basic to his theory and his whole case against Ruby. His theory, which he misrepresents as fact and in support of which he has multitudinous footnotes - to such eminent authorities as the British "seer" Sybil Leek - is that there was a conspiracy (all conspiracies are mafia, whether he uses that word or not) - to give Ruby a phony explanation for his presence. The Carlin woman was part of this conspiracy, as was the pimp with whom she lived. ^{She} ~~also~~ he claims that the police were part of this conspiracy and tipped Ruby off on when Oswald would be moved. ^{She} ~~this~~ is what allowed him to be there ~~at~~ the exquisitely precise moment. ^{She} ~~he~~ is quite wrong on this and it comes either from ignorance or indifference to what he can't twist to support his misconception. Really preconception. He has impressive lists of sources, until they are examined and then considered along with his text, what he says in it and what he doesn't. I was quite surprised that he does not know I exist. Earlier, when I first heard of his book and how close he is to here, I was surprised that he had not asked for access to what I have. He is not aware of it and I've seen no single citation to any of the records disclosed under FOIA. Well, he does not list any of my books as a source. He draws heavily, however, on books like Joesten's and Buchanan's.

His theory presented as solid fact comes entirely apart on a single, simple fact that he would have known if he'd read my first book or if he'd read the Warren Commission information on which it is, 100% based. The plain and simple truth is that it was not possible for the police to tip Ruby off on the precise moment they would move Ruby because they actually didn't know and because they did not control it. I'm not going back to Whitewash or its sources because I am clear enough on one matter, and I think there were several:

Scheim doesn't even say that Curry had told the press he would move Oswald at 10 a.m. and that this was delayed. He does say the whole business of Ruby's sending \$25 to the Carlin woman was contrived to cover Ruby's presence. (Not a word on how Ruby got into the building, though) ^{She} ~~he~~ to give him an alibi for being ^{there} ~~that~~ at the precise moment of movement of Oswald. However, after the police finished their interrogation of Oswald and were ready to move him, this was delayed by Tom Kelley's resumption of questioning of Oswald. The simple truth is that ^{she} ~~it~~ had not been for this (and another such development, I'm pretty sure, involving the postal inspector) ^{she} ~~Ruby~~ would have been moved from the building before Ruby even got to Western Union.

Things like this and the almost total absence of fact about the killings leads me to believe that Scheim had no interest in them and thus didn't bother to learn anything at all about them. Instead, having had this dream that the mafia did it, he concerns himself exclusively about what he can say shows this. Even then, I'm satisfied he has not read all his sources. I think he has had access to collections of others, like HSCA's and perhaps individuals, has heard people speak (and he has a number of mistakes in names where he has them phonetically and misspelled) and uses such things.

(On his sources, I'm sure part are padding, like the copies library cards and includes them as references for others to use while giving the impression that he also used them. He cannot possibly have read them all, particularly not because as he does not indicate in his hardback of 1988, he had the book done and published in 1980.)

He has no reference at all to the evidence of the killing. He writes about the JFK assassination without mention of the autopsy or the ballistics and other evidence,

He does not mention the rifle and he makes no mention of and cites no sources in the Commission's evidence. *or the ammo and other such weapons* *criticisms of this* *of it*

"Evidence" and "perjury" are words he does not understand. To him anything he can castigate as untruth is perjury. I mean that to him if someone is quoted by the FBI as having said something he does not believe he characterizes that as perjury. He also refers to statements attributed to people as testimony.

His arrogance of spirit is equalled by his sublime self-confidence in what he writes without any realization that he is really writing a novel.

I also have the impression that Scheim has led a sheltered life and knows little about people who come from the lower strata of life. He does not believe and he cannot understand that real people like the Carlin woman and George Senator can be genuinely scared to death, as without question they were. He refers regularly and often to narcotics and the mafia and Ruby being into narcotics but he had no indications that some of those people from the lower depths may have used them, such as some of Ruby's strippers when they are so confused about events of which they were part. However, if he had the faintest glimmer he'd have lost part of his mumbojumbo conspiracy to establish an alibi for Ruby's presence. (Of course this would not have prevented his capture, so there is little real point in it anyway.) There also is no point in this conspiracy nonsense because it is apparent that Ruby could have killed Oswald the night of the "press conference" and did not do it. He could have carried his gun then and had he premeditated I think it is certain that he'd have had it every time he tried to get into that building.

When he finds contradictory accounts he invariably uses the one consistent with his preconception. Example as the above - Ruby said he had the gun with him that night and that he didn't. Therefore he lied when he said he'd had it with him when he didn't. Lost in this is the certainty that if he'd planned to kill Oswald all along he would never have been without the means of doing it.

He just about says that all crime is mafia, although he used words like the "Mob" always with a cap, "syndicate" and organized crime and others. He regularly misuses words like "close", "associate," to give the impression of tight closeness. At one point he lists these kinds of contacts with Ruby and some of them are only a single contact, mostly on Ruby's initiative.

Scheim may think he is honest and scholarly but he is not honest and the only question is was he ignorant or does he misrepresente deliberately, does he exaggerate, and exaggerations are basic in this book, from lack of knowledge, from sincerity or dishonesty. (I am inclined to think ignorance and sincerity.) *135 add - 1 was too (1965)*

It is hard to image a book about two killings that say so very little about either one except to flaunt ignorance about both. He found no need for such things but he has a chapter on Nixon and the mafia, another on the Reagan administration, almost like appendices. They may relate to the mafia but not to the crimes about which he supposed writes. All all the sources on the mafia have relevance only if he can pin the crimes on them. How he even dared without giving full details of both and can consider himself honest I cannot see and don't. On honesty, later 3/5/89, I decided to check one of his footnotes, 144 on page 163. He uses Megaher for a quotation of Ruby alleging there had been a conspiracy, his statement to reporters of 3/19/65. He omits her reference to his "deathbed" statement, taped in secret with his lawyers' connivance, that he was alone, that there had been no conspiracy and no premeditation, an impulsive act. This deathbed statement contradicts Scheim 100%. His concept of integrity is to omit it altogether while having the brass to cite that very source at that page for the exact opposite. Under the title "Ruby's Final Statement" the one thing Scheim makes no reference to is his final statement. There was one, taped and published, as Scheim does not say. He quotes as Ruby's "final" statement several he made much earlier and disowned in his last one. As personal integrity and as scholarship I regard this as outrageous and unpardonable.

Under Ruby's final statement