

Rt. 42, Frederick, Md. 21701
2/25/78

Mr. Steve Bell
ABC News
1124 Connecticut Ave., NW
Washington, D.C.

Dear Steve,

Your New York associates appear to go for the far-out on political assassinations. The newest and best-financed of these is now in the promotional stage. It is by Edward J. Epstein and Readers Digest press, to be serialized in the issue of the Digest due about now. There has been a promo in New York Magazine. It made the wires.

If GMA airs Epstein and you'd like to call please feel free to do so.

Epstein is one of the most successful of the commercializers of the subject, a theorizer and one who from the beginning has always had some form of official support. He branched out into criticism of the major media, lumped together as "liberal" and, consistent with the mythology of the right, unfair.

After his second book, which was an inadequate and often unfair attack on the very vulnerable Jim Garrison, I paid no special attention to his work because it is essentially propaganda, is not scholarly or dependable, and in all cases served an official interest, whether or not he had official assistance. As an example his work defending the FBI in what it did against blacks was clearly supported by the FBI from its content and was plugged before its appearance on coast-to-coast TV by John Mitchell.

His current work appears to have been facilitated if not in fact arranged by the CIA "outs." The Angleton mark is visible. Helms' interest and assistance is likely. The reports are of a half-million advance by the Digest. No work on the political assassinations is worth that kind of investment today. The project director for the Digest is the man to whom the spookeries fed the content of KGB, which is virtually a house job for the FBI and CIA. He is John Barron.

Its basic theory is pointless - that one Nosenko, a Russian KGB defector, was a plant to feed disinformation to the Warren Commission and the CIA. Nosenko defected to the CIA in late February 1964. By then the line of the official solution to the JFK assassination had been set and leaked repeatedly. (You may recall this from the recent FBI releases.) There simply was no need or point in what the extremists no longer in the CIA fed to Epstein - that Nosenko's job was to persuade the U.S. that there was no Russian involvement in the JFK assassination.

Now what Nosenko really said - and I have many pages of unclassified FBI reports on this - is that the Russians suspected Oswald. They'd have been crazy not to! They regarded him as "an American sleeper agent." This meant CIA, not FBI, as Dulles himself told the members of the Commission in a secret meeting the transcript of which I obtained under FOIA. So with all the renewed interest in the JFK assassination, Nosenko's actual account points a finger at the Angletons and the Helmses as well as the CIA.

Whatever the sponsorship, without them Epstein would not have had this \$500,000.

Of course I've not seen the proofs. I've not seen the New York piece. I've delayed writing you in the hope it would reach me. If it comes later today I'll have it read and annotated by Monday morning.

Epstein had access to Nosenko. The CIA, which has taken care of Nosenko and given him a new identity, could have prevented it and would have ordinarily.

Compare this with what it has done in my current FOIA case for the still-withheld Warren Commission executive session transcripts.

They have assured the court that even if what the Warren Commission said about what Nosenko said about Oswald were made public it could endanger Nosenko's life because the Russians would kill him.

If and when I get that 14-year-old transcript it will be restricted to this. Yet in person, new identity and all, Nosenko is available to Barron and Epstein.

Examination of Barron's book shows that Nosenko really did the KGB a lot of harm when he defected. The KGB would never have done this injury to itself.

(That book is indexed. I correctly anticipated what Epstein would do and included xeroxes of every reference before the court of appeals, No. 75-1831, as an addendum to what is titled "Reply Brief.")

You may have no need to know anything about Epstein. Over the years he has shunned appearances that might have resulted in confrontations. He does not stand up and meet criticism or opposition. He is one of the fortunates whose work receives its promotion without his having to face confrontation. I believe it has made him a rich young man.

Glad we had a chance to meet and talk a bit.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg