

Dear Bud,

10/25/78

Somewhere in the accumulating stack - and the accumulation grows with each of the endless affidavits and the time they take - there is the draft of a letter I wrote you that I'd asked "il to retype. It was in response to your Agent Oswald proposal.

The newest AIB newsletter brings it to mind.

When you were here you made two proposal. You wrote me about one only. The other one might have been possible. There would, inevitably, have been disagreements but I immediately sought to discuss this with others to see if they could make any suggestions for a means of resolving the disagreements. I received your letter before I could see them.

Much of my work, as you know and saw recently, I give away. I do it to give it away. Some of it I want to use myself. The reason is unselfish - it has to do with what I regard as misuse and misinterpretations.

Take the recent Anderson columns. I can use the same reasoning to involve you in the assassinations or to prove that LBJ was responsible. But obviously Anderson and many editors were satisfied, as I am not. You may be.

There is much I would prefer not to do and not to feel I must do. I do get tired and I am now and have been tired. There are other things I would like to do. But I have not done what I have done or paid the cost I've paid to abdicate or to be part of what I regard as wrong.

I can't tell others what to believe or how to understand but I can be detached from that with which I am not in accord. I have been.

The situation has changed, is changing and will change more. There is nothing I can do about these things. But increasingly I become persuaded that in order to ~~EEEE~~ defend the integrity of my own work I may have to confront what I regard as inaccurate or irresponsible work. I'd prefer not to but if I must then I will.

I look back now and wonder if I was right not to try to do anything about all the mistakes others made, all the silly and irrelevant, often wrong-headed conjecturing, all the self-promoting always presented as selflessness.

The moving finger has yet to write the bottom line under the committee about which all ignored my advice and predictions that have been totally accurate and in point. However, whatever that end is, the present and continuing fact is that my credibility and that of my work has been seriously undermined by others whose work I disagreed with and in some instances opposed.

Despite weariness and the state of my health and the limitations it imposes on me and my awareness of the potential and the attractiveness of an easier life I am not pessimistic, am not resigned to failure and above all not about to stop.

Much of the past decade has required me to engage in distractions. They were not welcome but I took the time. So if I have to digress from my own work to protect it in the future it is not an experience that will be new for me.

If there had been any kind of help from those of professed dedication, help that would have done me no good personally, I could have turned out a number of other books. If I had any help now I could be much more productive. But there was no help of this kind and there will be none and others will be proclaiming their selflessness as before and engaging in what is costly and in its superior moments merely wastefulness.

Before these circulatory problems I would have been able to turn out drafts of solid work at a rate of one a month. I can't expect to do that now. With help I could do some at this pace but not as many. And there are many that should be done.

I will do what I can when I can. Where the work is essentially mine and I do not want to give it away or permit it to be used in manners I am not in accord with I will have no choice but to oppose what others may do with vigor. Bear this in mind if you proceed, with or without another Ewing and the irresponsible and inaccurate work people like Mike turn out, with Agent Oswald. I refer to only two of the things you mentioned when you spoke to me of this: Nagell and Nosenko. It would be pointless for me to try

to change your mind on these and other such things and I won't. But if I have to confront or try to have my own work survive this kind of thing and what it represents and what it can mean I will and I will do it forcefully. While I would much prefer not to I will have no choice if it comes to pass. There is only one way it can be avoided and that is for me not to have to do anything about the kind of thing that has always been hurtful and never been helpful.

However much you believe what you believe, and I am certain that your belief is sincere, it just is not right. Any more than Anderson's recent columns are right. And he has, to take the same examples much more basis than you do for Nagell or Nosenko as you view them.

You have every right to do your thing. But if you do it with Agent Oswald do not forget that I have the same right and will do my thing if I must.

If as you tell yourself you are not ego-tripping in this you have other alternatives, as in the past you have had them. But the fact is that in addition you do not know enough, do not understand enough and do not have the time. Your ghost will know no more, understand no better.

I may do nothing and say nothing about the recent past but I do remind you about this animated disaster of a committee all the rest of you brought to pass and immediately misdirected with all the pointless and wrong conjecturing. In May I proposed that we have a "truth squad" and that I do the work of responding to the committee simultaneous with what it would be doing. The rest of you went ahead with the idea without me and made a king-sized mess of it. There was no effective commentary, no exposure, not even basic understanding among all the combined "experts." And what an opportunity missed! I said nothing, stayed home and did my own work.

It was kind of you to offer to drive me home last week. I asked if you had something else in mind because when Kostman made the offer he did have something else in mind. We talked on the way home, he stayed for supper and we continued to talk. He impressed me favorably. Against desire and better judgement I agreed to help him prepare their coming responses.

Then I saw their ghastly newsletter. I wrote and told him and Jeff I would have nothing to do with it, as earlier, when I saw their critique, I told Goldberg to make it explicit that if they represent they speak for the critics they also say they do not speak for me.

If they do not, whatever it takes they will not soon forget it.

From the past, beginning with Lane in 1966 and including Garrison, I have learned that there is no changing the dedicated wrong. Perhaps then I should have done what I did not then do. (You might want to recall what you did see me do when it became necessary.) I have to learn from this past and when I consider the potential of the present and the future of misdirected books I will be guided by prior experience.

If I have not been more productive in completed manuscripts than I have been that is because those who could have assisted the productivity not only refused to and did not but also created time-wasting diversions I could not ignore. Those who withheld help were selfish. In continuing my work when I had no income I was not selfish. The reason those manuscripts were not completed is this self-seeking and withholding of help and even foreclosing other help that would have been available.

Of course I'm sorry the work has not been completed. I intend to do it when I can.

Until that time I also intend to defend its integrity, as if I must I will defend the integrity of my other work and separate it so that it is not downgraded by the justified downgrading of other work.

I sincerely wish I could see it any other way but the past tells me that is impossible. You've heard me cite Santayana before. He was exactly right. And I am not going to relive the past. There remains for me not enough of a future.

Sincerely,

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September 21, 1978

Mr. Harold Weisberg  
Route 12  
Frederick, Maryland 21701

Dear Harold:

This letter is a follow-up of our recent conversation with respect to a book on Oswald's possible role as a U.S. agent.

As we both know only too well, being even inadequately recompensed for work in this field is very very difficult. Your recompense in particular has been ridiculously small. Further, as we both know, lack of funds has dogged our investigations from their outset; even funds to cover minimal out-of-pocket expenses are difficult to obtain.

You know my belief that a book on Oswald's intelligence connections has been needed for a number of years, and that its publication would be particularly timely soon after publication of the Report of the House Committee. Its preparation will take considerable time and effort. Of course, it is a book that you should write and publish (as Jim and I have repeatedly urged for years), but your other duties have taken and do take priority. You have not been persuaded to move it to the head of the list.

Under the circumstances, I intend to attempt to write and publish such a book. It will be a much better book if I can persuade you to assist me, on a recompense basis, of course.

Let me make two formal proposals for your consideration:

A. (i) That you dictate into a tape recorder your detailed thoughts on the subject;

(ii) That you permit me soon thereafter to discuss the tape and seek clarification and expansion of points made on the tape;

(iii) permit me to xerox such material in your files that

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substantiates the points which I shall include in my manuscript;  
and

(iv) permit me to read the draft chapters on the subject  
which you composed some years ago. For these privileges, I would  
pay you \$5,000.00 in advance.

B. (i), (ii), (iii) As above.

(iv) permit me to xerox the draft chapters; and

(v) give me limited assistance in editing my draft  
manuscript when it is completed. For these privileges, I would  
pay you \$5,000.00 in advance and an additional \$5,000.00 upon  
completion of the editing process or upon December 31, 1979,  
if the editing process has not been completed prior to that date.

If you accept either proposal, and if the manuscript is completed  
and published, your efforts will be given prominent recognition  
in the foreword and in my promotion of the book. Also, if per-  
chance you like the manuscript, and if you so desire, I will be  
glad to have you listed as a co-author; otherwise, it will be my  
manuscript, and I will take full responsibility for it.

Please let me know your thoughts.

Warmest regards,



Bernard Fensterwald, Jr.

BF:crr