

733 82nd Avenue N. E.  
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Dear Bud,

Thanks for your letter of the 5th. The only problems I have with it are the matters of the checks and the CIA contact. Bob Smith said the Committee's checks were given to Russell in exchange for Russell's. If there were any such checks, I would like to see them. On the latter point, you did tell me a couple of years ago that CIA was checking out our progress. Do you know the names of the CIA people who contacted you?

I do believe we have to get this CIA business out in the open where we can deal with it. There are several reasons, too, why people who question our motives should not simply be put down as ingrates, crazies, or whatever. First of all, several of us have worked for the National Security Establishment. In view of the Government's extensive record of infiltration, agent provocateurism, spying, disruption and even assassination on the domestic scene, people have a right to be suspicious. There is an extremely high level of paranoia in the country. Part of it is realistic and healthy. The remaining portion can only be eliminated by honest communication between people. The Government would prefer no communication and more paranoia, because these heighten social aphasia.

The put-down can also result in closing off avenues of investigation which should be kept open. Such a case is that of the Chicago plane crash. Perhaps Skolnick doesn't have everything right, and he may even be completely wrong. Nevertheless, we ought to keep the issue open. The NTSB letter and the FBI response by themselves are enough to justify keeping the matter open.

But even if someone were in the extreme position of actually being "crazy" it would not justify ignoring his assertions. After all, Jack Ruby was insane, but he had some very important things to say about conspiracy.

What I'm saying, I guess, is that we ought to stick to the discussion of issues.

You answered my questions about possible CIA ties, so it is only fair that I make a statement about myself. First of all, I am not employed by the CIA at the present time, and never have been in the past. I have never been asked to work for the CIA. I have never had any voluntary role with the CIA. And I've had no other kind of relationship with the CIA. My former wife was a CIA secretary before our marriage and returned there to work after our marriage broke up. I did not marry her because she was in the CIA, and I have deliberately refrained from talking about the CIA with her since her return because that might jeopardize her employment security. She wants that security, and it may well become more important as the country sinks into chaos and the economy goes to hell.

It was through my wife, however, that I did get to meet people who were close to Hunt and the efforts to hit Castro.

A correction to your comment: I was not in State Department "intelligence work" "for years." Ask Bill Blue the kind of work I did in Lisbon. In Toronto I issued visas. During 1966-67, I worked on Rusk's staff. While there I wrote the top secret daily summary. It was an opportunity to see most of the written materials from State and the other agencies. I even saw much that I wasn't supposed to see. However, the job was not considered part of State intelligence (INR). It didn't really make much difference though, because I learned enough to convince me I should leave.

The unofficial grapevine carried a good deal of the best news. It was from this that I first heard about Dallas. Unfortunately, when the Warren Commission critics hit the limelight in mid-1966, the grapevine dried up. People were scared, and little was said after that. But the grapevine was, generally, used only by those people who had not undergone a closing of the mind similar to that described by Albert Speer. Unhappily, most people in the Department did develop a "need not to know" when they were faced with all the horrors of the sixties.

My last few months were spent in the maritime affairs office, which was pretty far removed from political or intelligence matters.

I've suspected being used by the CIA a few times, but that condition is not unusual in the State Department. In Lisbon I joined two friends from the Embassy

to observe a demonstration. I met them leaving the Embassy and didn't suspect till later they may have been sent by the CIA. I got into hot water for endangering myself, but learned later one of them had been asked by the CIA to return to Portugal as a "student" at the University. The other may be CIA. Bill Blue would know. His name was Mark Dion. The CIA also asked me to use my apartment as a "safehouse." I agreed, but so far as I know it never used it. Perhaps because my maid was there all day, or perhaps because of a reported radio transmitter in the office above my apartment. In Canada, I was sent to cover some speeches at a Vietnam "teach in." I was pleased because this was considered a "political" assignment, and the competition was heavy for political jobs. Our day-to-day work was visa issuing, and everyone wanted away from that. I did a report on one of the speakers, a Meyerson, who was one of the group of three Americans to first visit North Vietnam. Although I wanted to close my political report by stating Meyerson's passport should not be cancelled, I was told to take that comment out. I obediently followed that instruction, and when I returned to Washington found out why. I was called to testify at a hearing to cancel Meyerson's passport. I played it straight, even though I wanted to blurt out that the Government had no right to act against him. At that time I was a moderate liberal and was confused about the attempt to restrict his travel. Of course that wasn't what bothered the Government. It was afraid of what American citizens would learn about the War. Later I half-learned that the reason I was sent to the Meyerson speech was that the "USIS" man who covered all the rest was CIA. He couldn't blow his cover in testifying at the Administrative Hearing.

The only other CIA business I came close to was the "Young Turk" movement in the State Department in 1966. I attended a number of meetings and finally wrote a paper for Katzenbach. Toward the end, I sensed CIA involvement and lost interest. Recent news reports tend to substantiate my suspicions. Macomber (ex?-CIA) was set up in a new position to handle "employee problems". Our friend Crowley (CIA most probably) became an employee grievance official. Bittman, who is reportedly a sometime-CIA lawyer, began handling cases. Other reports say the CIA moved in to prevent the collapse of the Foreign Service when FSOs became discontent. Fine. It was Vietnam, the internal authoritarianism of the Department, and the loss of control over foreign affairs to the CIA (despite JFK's orders and NSAMs) that caused the 1966 uprising. The CIA did manage to keep the U. S. on the tracks with the Vietnam War until 1968, when the CIA reversed course as a result of the internal revolt in the CIA. Then the CIA began reversing what it was telling the President and setting the course for the Ellsberg disclosure. Perhaps if the CIA had not gnawed into the State Department, the Vietnam War would have come to a head two years sooner than it did.

This is what I have to disclose. Because there is so much suspicion about our Committee, I suggest we put out a "White Paper" in which each of us do what I've done above.

I have a few other suggestions, too. We ought to begin using our meetings to discuss substantive matter. We are close to learning about Dallas, and may be able to create a break-through, thanks to E. Howard Hunt. We ought to devote our next meeting to comparing notes on Hunt. But certainly, this is no time to close down. For the first time we have an ace suspect, and I have no intention of stopping now.

We ought to ask McCord to meet privately with the Committee. I am still not convinced he acted for any reason other than to protect the CIA as an institution after the capture. The CIA-Nixon feud looks to me like a falling out of thieves. McCord now talks about Nixon's incipient fascism, but what of McCord's work on the Emergency Preparedness group that drew up lists of radicals to round up in emergency? I agree that McCord's act was good, but like the Ellsberg disclosure, one is left with a feeling there is a good deal more that we haven't been let in on, and the undisclosed part may hasten the rush into U. S. fascism.

Another thing we might do is conduct a general discussion of our own political views. This would help us understand each other's approach to the assassinations, and would be useful in creating a framework of ideas (not just one) that might be applied to our investigations. I for one do not think that it is possible to understand the killings without having some idea of the political forces at play. The assassinations were not run-of-the-mill common law murders of famous people.

One last point - You and Bob came on pretty strong with the belief that Watergate had no connection to Dallas. That bothered me because <sup>you</sup> always argues for "objectivity." The Cuban Refugee and CIA backdrop common to both events was enough to raise considerable suspicion. Perhaps we ought to take a look at this. If Hunt played the key role in Dallas, what about McCord? How close was he to Hunt? Did McCord work any of the anti-Kennedy deals with Hunt? Was McCord working with Hunt on that post-JFK-assassination program to kill Castro and invade Cuba?

And one last idea- Could George O'Toole run a test on the voice recordings of Lee Harvey Oswald? The results would serve the Committee well.

Sincerely,

*Hal*