

4/18/68

Dear Helen,

Returned from N.O. early this a.m., more than usually tired, behind and satisfied at new developments. Your letters of 4/5, 11, 13 and tape awaiting me. Also Steffen's (tell him to drop "Mr.") of 4/8 with attachments.

Tape is as bad as you say. I'll read transcript as soon as I can, which may not be for a while, and if I want you to try more I'll return, with original tape. I've since interviewed him at length.

Hoover is on record with worse about King, at the White House, where a Congressman friend was present, and before the Women's Press Club, if you recall.

At the moment I can make no recommendation about what to buy at the Archives for \$10.00, which means 50 pages. I've just gotten the executive-session transcripts and long for the chance to read them. If you decide on anything, first let me know. I may have it.

What I might have used from SS was ~~to~~ SEP. Haven't, haven't even used my own yet. Will write Ruark when I'm out from under. Good idea. But I've many things following this N.O. trup, including perhaps 12 hours of taped interviews to digest, perhaps transcribe. I'll send you more when it serves a purpose and is possible.

On the CD's and CE's, write my good friend and brilliant student Paul Hoch, 2537 Regent St., Apt 202, Berkeley, Calif. 94704, and ask him for what he has already done with this. Tell him there are two of you and you are working with me. He has done most, if not all of this.

If he can safely undertake it, I've two more chores for Steffen. I should write him directly but save these few minutes and then you both know. First, can he conduct any quiet investigations in Tampa, tracing down a person and perhaps interviewing him? Second, because he is an operator, this, in utmost confidence: I have just learned from a source that is sometimes quite accurate, sometimes otherwise, that a man named Ward was skipper of the Marion Lykes when LED shipped out to USSR. Now he is said to have been the father of Hugh Ward, Banister's former partner and the pilot of the plane in which Chap Morrison died so mysteriously. He is also said to have communicated with a ham near N.O. and to have been patched by phone to Banister daily. Can he check records and see if Ward had a ham outfit on that ship? Or any other way of finding out if he had the kind of radio that would have made such communication possible?

Again, thanks, and best to you all.

Sincerely,

4666 - 27th Ave. No.
St. Petersburg, Florida 33713
13 April 1968

Dear Harold:

The part of the tape in which you would be most interested is the very part that I just could not read with any measure of success. The man seemed to start his replies strong and then drop his voice. I'm sorry.

I got as far as what I have enclosed and saw that I just could not get his answers. So I played the tape through a couple of times since, in the past, when I have had a distorted recording, sometimes this would help me to filter out the voices but it just didn't do any good. I tried it on both recorders, various tone control settings, and with and without headphones. It may be that if I had ever heard the original and had some idea of what he was saying, I would then have been able to decipher it. I am not even confident of parts of what I did transcribe.

I made no other copies of any kind. The tape is being sent separately and I made no copy of it either.

I do feel as if I have let you down and I am still willing to transcribe tapes for you.

What a mess the Martin Luther King assassination follow-up is. I think the planners of these assassinations should get new script-writers. If the Negroes sound bitter, who can blame them? So am I bitter.

Wednesday night a friend phoned to tell me something her maid was delighted to report. Her maid was over-joyed at news (source undetermined) that Stokely Carmichael had decided to switch to the Martin Luther King camp. If only this were true, it would be wonderful. There is probably no other Negro who has the ability he has. If this same rumor is very wide-spread, many could follow him in the mistaken belief that what he advocates in the future is the same that King would have promoted had he lived.

I have noticed that all the news coverage of the King assassination has provided new excuses to damn and double-damn Oswald, with repetitions of the "psychopathic killer" statements. Radio, TV, newspapers - they are all hammering at Oswald again.

Were the critics getting too close to convincing the public? Even so, surely there could have been a better way than what has been crossing my mind the last few days. Hoover had paved the way for what happened to King. Another friend told me yesterday that Hoover had made a flat statement recently, heard on some radio station, that Dr. Martin Luther King was a phony. This lady listens to the radio constantly, is very accurate in what she relates to me since she takes careful notes but the dial on her radio is not accurate and she never knows which station she hears unless the call letters are given. If it is a distant station she can't always keep the station tuned in long enough to identify it.

My best to you and Lil. Be careful.

4666 - 27th Ave. No.
St. Petersburg, Florida 33713
11 April 1968

Dear Harold:

You have no doubt been thinking the Post Office has done it again since none of the transcripts have reached you as yet. Any other time the guilt could be theirs but not this time. My fault.

I got one page done (with a few gaps) and things began to happen to interrupt to the point I had to stop for a while. We had a utility trailer that we no longer needed and my husband decided to sell it so he placed an ad in the newspaper. As you can guess, the phone began to ring - and ring - and ring. I sold it yesterday all by myself, the ad is canceled and that problem is out of the way. By itself, this would not have been too bad, but when it was added to the calls following the assassination of Martin Luther King, it was too much.

We are on a two-party line and cannot take the phone off the hook so I had to grin and bear it and drop anything that required concentration.

I am hopeful that today I can get back to it. Just wanted you to know that nothing had been lost in the mail and to tell you I am sorry it is not done.

Steffen has offered to pay for some of the material in the archives that is not in the 26 volumes, \$10.00 worth. You know more about what would be most valuable to us than I do. I have no doubt you are the one person who knows about as much about the material there as the man in charge does.

I talked to Bob Ruark yesterday and he was saying he felt so guilty that he had not replied to a letter from you but that he, too, had been sidetracked from everything. The past few nights on the program have been anything but pleasant. All of the prejudice has been in evidence. Seems like no one has learned a thing.

My best to you and Lil.

Helene

4666 - 27th Ave. No.
St. Petersburg, Florida 33713
5 April 1968

Dear Harold:

This is not a very happy day. Assassination seems to be establishing a new way of life in our country. High-powered rifles with scopes, left at the scene to be found - conveniently. Probably to be traced to a mail-order house. And if it was sent to a post office box. . . What was Lee Harvey Oswald's definition of democracy?

There is a ray of hope, however. I held my breath last night when President Johnson came on the air for fear he would announce the appointment of a commission. Wisely, he did not. Apparently a lot was learned about conducting the follow-up to any assassination. There was no immediate arrest this time. But - the good old FBI is on its way to the rescue. And this is where we came in before.

The legible tape arrived yesterday. Thank you. I will be on it today. Since I can not send anything by registered mail before next Thursday - I have no way to get to a post office till then - to save time, suppose I send one copy at a time in separate envelopes? I know you want the transcript as soon as possible.

I could not return the first two tapes before since I was out of stamps and had to wait till my husband could pick up a new supply which he did yesterday. Sure do miss being able to ask him to do various little errands for me before he went to this new job. He was always near a post office three or four times a week.

Kerry Thornley is married; his wife is a teacher and this is his support while he tries to sell his writing. He does not seem to find any publishers who want his material so it is lucky his wife is working.

Steffen's returned letter was addressed to Frederick, Pennsylvania 21701. What was it the post office said about the zip code insuring delivery? This was an understandable error on his part - you remember Bob Ruark had that problem and his repetition etches the wrong state on the brain.

Bob Ruark was in the throes of making a decision on entering politics. He decided not to do so. He kind of let everything go but apologized for not returning your call and said this coming week he will be catching up on the matters he had let slide.

That Jefferson Street address bothers me more and more. I shall write Penn Jones and ask him if he knows what occupies that address. We will work up something for you.

Steffen says he can't imagine what he may have sent you that you would find useful on the air but you are welcome to any of it. He does not mind one way or the other about use of his name so long as his address is not given. It is not evident from his letters but he is quite shy. For myself, I have no need for publicity. If attribution is felt necessary, then my name may be given, but my make-up does not require recognition. And I think Steffen feels as I do: We will be amply rewarded when the day arrives that the entire matter is resolved and we are assured such a farce cannot happen again.

When Steffen works, he is a radio operator. Maritime. Nothing to worry about there so far as use of his name is concerned. This is why he has had so much time to spend on study of the 26 volumes. He had not, however, intended to remain ashore for as long as he has. He seems to feel the same compulsion I do about this.

Harold, why don't you write to Bob Ruark and ask him for comments on Thornley? He has talked with him more off the air and may have something helpful for you. He did tell me that Thornley spoke well of Garrison when he returned from New Orleans but I did not ask for anything further since I would not be aware of the kind of thing that would be of interest or value to you.

The short talk with Lil on the phone was enjoyable. I like her, as I knew I would. Hope that ankle is all well again real soon.

I have been working on a thing that may or may not be of use to you. I kept running into references to various CD numbers which were sometimes subsequently identified by CE numbers and as often were not. And, in examining the various exhibits, it seemed all disjointed. So I thought perhaps it might help to have a list of the various documents, sub-listed by their pages, and cross-referenced to the exhibit numbers.

When this is completed so far as I can do it, I will send you a copy. Steffen has suggested that, since you are forever searching in the archives, it might give you as idea as to where to look for missing reports as well as a reference to what is not included in the published exhibits.

We have the list of basic source materials - on microfilm which is real good on the eyes. I dug out an old plastic stereo viewer for 35 mm film that my husband had adapted for use on film without sprocket holes and it works fine so long as you are blind in one eye. Otherwise, just a bit confusing.

Your Photographic Whitewash added some of the missing material in my abstract. Thank you, Mr. Weisberg, for publishing it.

Almost time for the postman. I will send back the first two tapes you sent. ^{tomorrow -} Sunday I'll check on empty boxes. The tapes I will mail: The tape used to hold them together can be removed quite easily and cleanly with lighter fluid with no traces left. The same with the label I will use. Then you will have a couple of nice clean boxes.

I will be glad to do any tapes for you if you are satisfied with this one when you get it. My husband knows that I am doing this for you but he is far too busy now to even be curious as to the content. Steffen also knows of it and that you wish it to be kept confidential so that he has asked no questions.

When Steffen made one of his rare visits yesterday, I let him read your last three letters and he will give attention to the truck you mentioned. He is discreet and anything in the letters will go no further. No worry there. He always sends me copies of all his correspondence, thanks to his trusty thermofax. Usually I save mine for him to read when he is here, passing on immediately anything I feel he should know right away, such as your requests for attention to the radio logs, etc., but not the entire communication.

The postman just went down so bye for this time.

My best to you both.

Helen