

Dear Dave,

11/8/74

After writing my impressions from your letter last night I began to read your piece. I decided to continue with this reading this morning instead of doing other overdue work and instead of mailing the addressed letter for several reasons.

I feared you might not understand the letter and might not like it and its forcefulness. I also wanted to give you an opinion and have basis for discouraging Jim's paying any attention to it now when he has so much that presses upon him. And with the concerns in my mind, because I knew I would read it sooner or later and never when I did not have something else to do, I believed it would be better to read it while these concerns were fresh in my mind.

I started by merely marking marks from which I would write you. Then this morning I changed to making notes. Some may be illegible. Where you can't read or divine, just send the pages back and I'll explain or expand.

As I wrote last night, you really can't do this thing until you have read WW IV and Howard Roffman's coming book.

Then I think you'll have to do some rethinking, including some redefining. But by and large it is very good.

My own view is that the rethinking should include building to our suit rather than having it a longer incident. It does provide the definite answers, this suit above all others (save that if the spectre agreed with the conclusions it would have been advertised rather than suppressed). The difference here is that Jim and I had no external controls imposed upon us, he did what other lawyers had not conceived and we were able to work together well and fast. And that I was really prepared with proofs.

You will need citations and I have corrected factual errors. I believe much that you refer to as court or archival records can be cited from the new book, which you'll have seen.

You continue to use outdated and today meaningless words, like "critic." I think you require reformulation. You can't really write a study of suppression or evidence in terms of the published work of those who never made any effort to end suppression. So, I think you'll have to break this into ones, first what was possible with the published WC materials and what could be postulated from them, and what followed.

I have no good substitute for "critic" for you. The description has taken hold. It is also deceptive in that the purpose is not criticism. It is more and other than scholarship. It is the establishing of fact and truth.

Some that are "critics" really are not. Epstein, for example, assumes the basic truth of the Report and assails his pet enemies on the Commission (generally those to his liberals) as a means of defending the executive branch, chiefly DJ and FMI.

And how about the longer list of gynecopathic works? They are those with money and influence behind them. Not one of these authors sought to end suppression. Because you supposedly are dealing with all sides, need you not include this in some manner?

In dealing with the effort to end suppression in the Archives, you can't use the designation "critic." Sylvia, whose work is magnificent, made no such effort. Of these whose books are published, only one did. Roffman later did, and his book is due soon.

I have added several suggestions for citation to WW II. It is the first book to include what I by then had resurrected from official oblivion, although it coincided in time with the appearance of Lane's book and the reprint in English of Sauvage's. The point here is that if it was possible for me in 1966, was it not also for others? Yet there is only one other work to use the Archives materials this way, the later Six Seconds, all but two of the documents in which were then not new and were cribbed. This is a failing that can't be halved on officialdom. The fault lies with publishers, if not authors and "scholars." Did any professional historian undertake the task, for example? (I, the sense of doctor, heal thyself to your brethren.) And is there not an apt sermon to professional historians in that they have not done their duty to a turning point in history while it was possible and when society had the pressing need? Plus an object lesson for them: Jim and I have done and worked as no professional historian would or could.

On more minor matters, you have some pronouns and tense problems you should correct and unify.

But where you deal with the opening of the Archives from suppression you remain with several problems one of which you understand in part.

One is that not all suppression is by it. Example, spectra. It is among the bits of essential evidence the Commission never had.

Another is that the plain truth is that I have done the basic work. Hoch has done some but it remains to be used. The real and effective help I had was from Jim only, and it was really great. His approach in C.A. 2052-73 is unique. But so was the situation I picked for this suit. I was and am well prepared for many others, but not to the degree I was for this, which had been back-burnered await the propitious moment. The amount of preparation is not apparent. It extended to having every record of every stenographic transcript, every bill and receipt, even every covering letter for all originating outside of Washington.

(You confuse "transcript" and "manuscript." Never the latter.) You also use deposition incorrectly, as I've indicated. The fact is that what the Commission itself considered depositing wasn't. It was ex parte questioning under oath by a staff lawyer and I think you should make clear that this is not a true deposition, which means the sides, cross-examination.

Because you are dealing with secrecy, I think you should explain this more, that even the published testimony was taken entirely in secret and was initially classified "TOP SECRET." The reason for downgrading the classification was to permit type-setting!

When you have digested WW IV I suggest you add citations in addition to your references to archival materials where both are the case. Also to law-suits by number, for scholars can and will find more in them when they can't see what "is and I have in our files.

I have suggested eliminating some opinions, in part because they are not valid. However, I think interpretations are necessary and for the most part are quite good.

Your profession might find it unwelcome, but I do believe it would be helpful to it and to scholars of the future to make clear that academic preparation in the profession is not only inadequate in political cases like this but that from the multitude there was no David with a single stone. It is a failing of the profession and it should be made aware of it. Political cases require activists, not academicians and skills not taught in educational institutions. In this connection, Euzkany Epstein, the professional political scientist, is the only one to have done a book (Thompson is a philosopher, which made him a better crack-commercializer) yet his is the least scholarly work and the one closest to journalistic in method: interviews from which he selected what suited his purposes and with those he selected - all with a very narrow perspective and the assumption of what he inveighed against, political truth. He did assume the Commission's fundamental assumption, of Oswald's guilt. He never addressed the question in any way. Scholarship?

No historian has added to knowledge. None has undertaken to break the suppression barrier. Even the first bibliographies were not by historians. You are, I believe, the first to do it.

Interrupted here several hours ago. Best regards,