

1/7/69

Dear Paul and Gary (and no others),

The attached are the best copies I can make of two letters I received yesterday from Dick Bernabei, one of my correspondents and a young man whose work has been solid and whose approach has been very good. He had done fine things on trajectories, new things of real meaning. He has been sitting on Dawnay, trying to keep him on the ground (which is no easy task with Joesten pulling upward). I send these two you, hoping they will not lead you to hasty and perhaps unfair judgments of the men, because I think you should know the content on "Hepburn". Perhaps some of the information will also have meaning to you, especially if you followed the German student disturbances and recall if anything of special interest came out then about Springer, who seems willing to publish libelous material.

If you have any means of learning more about the Canadian angles and names, that would be helpful. As time goes on, I become more concerned we have not had the end of this operation.

A small thing that fascinates me, with the French minority activities and attitudes in Canada: a law firm with a possibly French name that has a phone number 1066! That was quite a year for the French vs the English, wasn't it? So, I wonder of the other connections of this firm.

Paul, no reason not to share this with Jim and Hal, asking them that it go no further, for these letters should not be held against those who wrote them, especially not Dick.

I think the Thompson content can be of enormous importance. I knew he had once started to copy the film, in the form of stills, and been caught or stopped. If you recall my initial reaction when his stuff first appeared in the SEP, you perhaps understand how this excites me. His attempt was in the LIFE office, when he worked there. Recall also the limited number of sources of Z.

I'd be interested in any thoughts you have. I am gradually accumulating names of those connected with Lomax, in England and on the continent, and some first-names only in the U.S., where the French edition expresses indebtedness to Pat, Ann, Bernard and Mary-Ann. Two of these names link in my kind and not with any comfort! They are the first names of two people I know, man and wife! Pat and Bernard. Of course, this is without meaning without proof, for these are not uncommon names.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

FROM DICK SPRAGUE
TO DICK BERNABEI
RE FAREWELL AMERICA

370 Howard Drive
Hartford, Conn. 06130

~~The Knickerbocker Club
One West 42nd Street
New York 36, N.Y.~~

Dear Dick (BERNABEI)

This is a quick note to ask a favor of you. I'll answer all of your other letters and points later. The book Perm. I was referring to is the old book "The Plot" by James Hepturn. I don't know whether you know its history or not, but it is very significant. You read, I'm sure, Garrison's public remarks about French intelligence penetrating the JFK assassination team and sending him information on the plot and plotters.

Last May he showed me what they had sent. It was a draft of "The Plot". Subsequently they contacted him from Geneva and sent him more details and have been providing information ever since. Two investigators have been to Geneva and Paris and checked out the story. The group calling themselves "James Hepturn" are ex-French intelligence people, now private citizens, who did penetrate "The Committee", the name they have given to the higher level people who arranged for JFK's assassination.

"The Plot" was finally published in French and German and several other languages. The French version is called "L'Amérique Bricolée" and copies are available from Steve Burton in Los Angeles. I bought one but unfortunately I can't read French, so when the enclosed is

appeared in Ramparts Magazine this month, I jumped for joy and sent a check to Tara for 10 copies in English of "Farewell America".

The damned thing was returned as you see it in the enclosed envelope. I'm trying to check through Ramparts to see what happened. There are several possibilities I suppose. The CIA could have chosen this method of ~~Postal interception~~ to keep the books out of the U.S.

Or the whole address, name and ad could be a fake. Or the French group might have set up shop at that address, and been closed down quickly by CIA through RCMP or Canadian intelligence. There is no telephone listed at the address.

I can tell you this much, the book is not a fake, nor is the group who wrote it. They have most of the facts about the shots and the actions in Dealey Plaza correct. They check out with everything else I know. The only names named in the book as being part of the Committee, that we don't know from other sources, are Will Fritz and Jesse Curry.

The methods the French people used to penetrate the Committee were typically French; women agents.

Would you know anyone in Montreal who can check out the firm and the address, or are you close enough to do it?

Dick (FRANCE)

Dear Harold:

30 December 1968

A thousand thanks for your warning about Farewell America. Enclosed is a copy of Sprague's letter to me about the book; it will explain for you the origin of my almost unbridled enthusiasm. Besides this, Penn Jones appended a note to a brief letter that he sent to me about another matter. In the note he said to watch out for the book because it gave the plot from beginning to end. Jones did not discuss the authorship. Joesten had read a serialized version of the book (then called The Plot) in a German tabloid by the name of Bild am Sonntag (I think that this is published by Springer Verlag in Berlin). Several weeks ago Joesten asked me if I had heard of Hepburn, and whether the book was authentic. I could give him no information for I did not connect Jones's Farewell America with The Plot. I then got Sprague's letter and I began to thump with enthusiasm.

In accordance with Sprague's request, I sent \$7 to Tars Editions in Montreal and asked that they send me at least one copy (paid in advance with the \$7) and 10 copies (for Sprague) which I would pay when I received them. At the time I did not know whether XX Tars was legitimate, and did not want to send as much as \$50 to a company that perhaps did not even exist. In my letter I expressed extreme interest in the book and offered my help in getting copies into the States if they had trouble moving them across the border.

It was on the basis of the enthusiasm that I expressed in that letter that Lamarre phoned me on (or about) December 11. He explained that they had overcome their difficulties in getting the books into Canada, and that the copies that I requested would soon be sent to me. Chiefly, however, he was interested in securing my help in setting up a showing of the movie here at the University. Naturally, I said that I would do what I could, and I have indeed made preliminary arrangements. I am awaiting further word from Lamarre before I go farther. Lamarre asked what caused me to volunteer my help, and I explained that I knew about the authorship of the book; that Hepburn was a pseudonym representing a group of individuals. I do not think that I mentioned French intelligence. I said that I had received information about the authorship from a person who was in touch with Garrison.

After I spoke with Lamarre and was thinking about our conversation, I realized that he was calling from New York, and not from Montreal, as I had supposed. A few days later I wrote to Tars Editions (Lamarre had given me the name and phone number of Mr. Sutto) and told them to advise Lamarre that if he was in N.Y. he should contact Dick Sprague or Trent Sough for help.

When my books failed to arrive after a few weeks, I called Sutto and asked about the delay. He said they would be sent within a week or two. The distribution of the book is being handled by Sutto's law firm in Montreal. I gather that the address on Brescotes Street is little more than a mail drop. The phone number of Sutto's law firm is 844-1066; I do not know the name of the firm.

Before I heard from Lamarre, and when I had no reply to my request for books from Tars, I wrote to Dawnay and asked him to look out for it in Europe ~~xxx~~ on the chance that I could not secure the books here. I gave him the name of the French version, too, (L'Amerique Brûle). Dawnay got hold of the French version and gave me a very brief account of it. He said that the book described the events on Dealey Plaza pretty much as Joesten had outlined them, but that it dealt mainly with advance plotting before the shooting. He said the L'Amerique Brûle failed to give details that were printed in the German serialized account that Joesten told him about. Specifically he said that L'Am. B. did not mention the amount that was paid to Curry and Fritz, whereas the German account did.

I have requested a copy of the French version from Steve Burton *KBD*

(Sprague said burton had copies), but I have not received a reply from him. I gather that people are buying up the French version very fast, even though few can read French. Lamarre said that both the French and English versions are available from Tara.

Also I have written to Springer Verlag in Berlin for back copies of the issues of Bild am Sonntag that give the German version (sorry, I do not yet know the dates of the issues). That was only a few days ago, so I have not heard from them.

That is about the whole of my experience with Farewell America. I appreciate being put on guard about it, for I would indeed hate to be responsible for promoting an untruth in this case. I try like hell to beware of red herrings, but I must often rely on the judgment of others who I think know more than I do. If Sprague had not read the material himself, and were relying solely on Garrison's word, I believe I would have been more wary. But I trust Sprague, and I was reassured by his personal knowledge of the matters involved. Besides, Penn Jones had put me on the lookout for the book, and I believed that I had more than enough reason to regard it authentic and important.

There is no real harm done, though, for I had only mentioned it to a few people, and can now urge a measure of caution.

I spent the past weekend in Toronto at a convention of ~~teachers~~ teachers of Classics, and there I spoke for a time with Dan Gillis, who was a fellow student with me at Cornell. Gillis, you may recall, works with Thompson at Haverford College. Gillis is not entirely familiar with investigations surrounding the assassination, but he had a few ~~like~~ pieces of information that will interest you.

Most interesting is this, for it ~~is~~ relates to your remarks about who has copies of the Zapruder film. He said that Thompson has a copy of Z. Then he said that, I merely commented that that must be how he managed to make such accurate sketches for his book, and Gillis confirmed that that was the case. I did not ask whether Thompson's copy of Z has the missing frames, for I suppose that it does; he prints them in his book. If Thompson printed all that he had, then his copy does not contain the material between the sprocket holes, for they are not shown in his book. I may get down to the area of Trenton, N.J., in a month or so, and Gillis will then try to arrange for me to see Thompson. I may then get a chance to see what he has.

If I get to see Z210 I will take special note of it for you-- especially the area between the sprocket holes. I suppose that one of the things that interest you there is the movement of Phil Willis, although if it is in order to establish a shot before Z210, that hardly seems necessary. I think that photo evidence already exists definitely to prove a blast before Z195 and a JFK hit before Z200. If you want me to send you an outline of points that bear on the question when the first shot was fired, please tell me. It all is based on the movements of SS agents Hickey and Bennett, and on those of JFK and Mrs K as visible in Zapruder, Betzner, and Willis 5. Probably our views are the same re-
~~garding the timing of the first shot, but if you want me to outline mine,~~
garding the timing of the first shot, but if you want me to outline mine, please tell me so, and I will. I think that the evidence is quite conclusive: a blast (but not necessarily a hit) before Z195, and a JFK hit before Z200.

Gillis mentioned some other things that you may wish to know. He said that Richard Popkin has some photos (four, I think) taken at some

sort of political rally a few days before Bob Kennedy was shot, and that they show Sirhan with the girl in the polka dot dress. I don't know ~~xxx~~ whether Willis saw the pictures or merely heard about them.

Here is another issue that is hanging fire-- that is, I don't know whether matters have gone beyond the point that I know about.

Canadian broadcasting Company several weeks ago ran a TV interview with ~~Ex~~ William Bradford Huie when two of Huie's Look articles had already been published. It was not of very great interest, for he gave no data that added to the material in his articles. But in the course of the interview he made a cryptic remark which I correctly interpreted to mean that he was going to talk with Sprague and hear what Sprague had to say about a possible connection between the JFK and MLK killings. Huie did not say much, but I knew what Sprague was up to, and I put two and two together.

I mulled over it for a few days and finally resolved to write Sprague and tell him that I thought Huie was either a fool or a scoundrel, and to be on guard. ~~Sprague has explicitly indicated that~~ By the time he got my letter, Sprague had already talked with Huie. Sprague's reply to me indicated that he had indeed interested Huie in the possibility that "Frenchy" is the Raoul who ^{lured} Ray into the plot. Huie said he would follow up the lead as Sprague suggested, and would show Frenchy photos to Ray. I was delighted to learn that Huie was going to co-operate with the "scavengers", for the possibility of opening up a line directly to Ray was very exciting. Sprague seemed very encouraged, for Huie gave him some information which indicated that he thought Sprague serious enough to trust (I'll mention that info below). However, Sprague wrote subsequently and indicated that for some unexplained reason Huie had cooled to Sprague's "wooing", and that the line to Ray might now be closed.

It drives me wild that Huie has not yet published his promised third article about Ray, for it is supposed to deal with Ray's activities after the shooting-- material that I am especially interested in, his travels in Canada and Europe. Not that I will necessarily believe what he says, but I would like to know what Ray (or those who control him) would like us to think. I cannot help thinking that Sprague might have touched a raw nerve in his conversation with Huie, and that in his subsequent inquiries Huie learned something that he dared not even imagine. That is purely a guess, and things may have changed since my last letter from Sprague, but that third article about Ray is a hell of a long time in coming.

This is what Huie told Sprague. He said that he has a witness who got a good look at "Willard", the man who is supposed to have done the shooting. This is a witness that the FBI does not know about; a woman, I think. The witness said that Willard was not Ray. That ties in neatly with the failure of known witnesses to identify photos of Ray as the person they knew as Willard.

Ray's story, according to Huie, is that he was outside the hotel at the time of the shooting, waiting in the Mustang. Ray says that Raoul did the shooting, and that he (Ray) had no knowledge that King was going to be shot.

The reason why Sprague is interested in Raoul is because Ray's description of Raoul corresponds closely with Frenchy. Also some other things indicate that Frenchy may have been involved.

Sprague did not mention Dawnay's inquiries in London. Just as well, for if Dawnay is right, it is best not to give "them" time to think up a plausible excuse for the hanky-panky that might have gone on in London. I especially want to see what develops in that regard.

After I sent you the material from CIL-- the tests re trajectory-- I re-read Frazier's testimony and noted parts that may negate the assertions that I made previously. I have not yet had time to check the testimony of those who handled the rifle before Frazier.

Even if the trajectory tests prove worthless because the scope was removed before Frazier got it, there is still grounds for accusing fakery.

The WR distinctly gives the impression that the rifle was sighted high and to the right at the time of the assassination, for it asserts that such an arrangement would be advantageous to a shooter in "Oswald's" window. That assertion is based not only on something that Frazier says in his testimony, but (perhaps even more directly) on a letter from Hoover to Rankin in which Hoover makes that claim. I do not yet have the reference for that letter, for I saw it at a time when this issue did not especially interested me, and merely made a mental note that it existed. The letter clearly indicates that Hoover believed the rifle was sighted in high and to the right at the time of the shooting. Moreover, I am almost certain that the wording of that passage of the WR was taken from Hoover's letter to Rankin.

I had to go to that conference before I could trace any of the relevant material. I'll especially note the testimony of Lt. Day and of FBI agents Latona and Stombough, for one of them may have removed the scope before Frazier got it.

I'll collect the material, and when it's ready I'll send it to you. It may take time though, for I am preparing lectures for a new school term.

I hope that this business with Farewell America does not upset things, though it might, if indeed it is phony. I lapped up Sprague's account of the authorship, and it's clear that Sprague is fully convinced that it is authentic-- he relies very heavily on Garrison. Also Penn Jones.

This thing could easily get out of hand.

Still,

Dick

bernabei