

.XIII

11/5/66

Dear Ray,

In addition to those too many things of which you know I'm working on the "new" material ( a can of worms ) so I cannot really answer your letter of 10/30/.

Glad to hear of the Mort Sehl plug. I take it, from their lack of response, that Bill and Maggie are not in accord with my suggestion of needing Liebler and of possibly involving Sehl in brief phone bits. I think it could be exciting and different.

I did, immediately, forward the copy to Sylvia, heavily insured. If it does not get there, let me know and at least we'll get the insurance back for you.

Thanks for your kind words and thoughts.

Sincerely,

October 30, 1966

Dear Harold,

Many thanks for your suggestions ~~xx~~ re my monograph. Some of the points you made I agree with -- others I do not. I will comment only briefly on your criticisms, a number of which I believe are ~~xx~~ based on a mistaken impression of my purpose. This is shown most clearly by your statement re the Hypotheses, ". . . it is much too long and accomplishes little purpose, that it will bore and bewilder the reader unnecessarily. This is fine for your own thinking (and presumably others students of the case?) but is not the kind of thing the average reader wants."

That's just the point. I did not intend this for the ~~x~~ average reader. For better or worse, it's a research piece, and would only be of interest to one who had already done some serious general reading on the case.

I'm sure most critics for a long time have suspected, as I certainly have, that 399 was planted. Yet, none of the previous material had dealt adequately with the question; nor could this be done in a brief article or in the context of a general book -- even so detailed a general work as Whitewash.

I urged Vince to do a thorough piece on 399 well over a year ago. Only when none appeared, from him or anyone else, did I decide to proceed. When I did, I knew I would not feel justified in calling 399 a plant until I had examined in detail all plausible alternatives for its legitimate involvement; and thus, the Hypotheses. Of course, I realized that such a ~~dx~~ detailed listing, with compilation of contrary evidence, would make for difficult reading. But I considered it to be -- as I do now -- the very heart of the study, without which there would be little point in doing it at all; for then, indeed, it would add little to what had already appeared. (You see, I really don't agree that the piece as it is ". . . does not add materially to what is now generally available.")

Simply put, and fully recognizing my own limitations, I feel I have done ~~what~~ what I set out to do: to show that beyond reasonable doubt, 399 was planted. I have no doubt whatever that a more thorough and professional job can be done, and the publication of my piece in no way precludes others from presenting additional information on the subject. As for ~~my~~ me, writing is a distasteful, time consuming and tedious chore; and in view of my belief that I have substantially accomplished my original purpose, I will not ~~make~~ make the changes and additions you suggest--at least not at this time--as I indicated I probably would not when we discussed it in person (to illustrate what I mean by tedious chore, you wrote Whitewash in six weeks; it took me almost that long to do B.B.)

I am presently planning to put out perhaps a thousand ~~x~~ copies myself, in its present form, pending only word from Vince who wanted to try to get it published through contacts of his.

I would have to sell approximately ~~350~~ 399 copies at full price (2.95) to recover all direct costs in preparation and printing. I do feel that anyone who has read enough of the case to be aware of the significance of 399 would be willing to pay that price, if necessary, to read it. And to such people, I don't think the lack of neatness in makeup will be an important handicap. I certainly ~~would not want~~ don't want to be overly optimistic, but I think there is a very reasonable chance of selling ~~350~~ 399 copies.

None of the above means I do not appreciate your suggestions, and your kind offer to have your artist assist me at no charge. To the contrary, I definitely do; and I agree that candor ". . . is the price and measure of friendship". Should I get a subsequent offer to publish in further expanded form, I certainly would give careful consideration to adding the material you suggest. But for the present, it will have to sink or swim the way it is.

I want to tell you that I very much enjoyed and valued meeting you and your wife, and thank both of you sincerely for your hospitality. Our differences notwithstanding, (the critics, after all, are nothing if not strong-minded individualists), I consider you a man of great intelligence, courage, and ability.

However, for your own good, your wife's, and for the good of the historic cause we are engaged in, you ought to slow down. The whole load is not on you alone, and you should not jeopardize your health by driving yourselves as if it were.

Cordially,



P.S. -- Mort Sahl showed your book and gave it a very nice plug on his show last night.

P.P.S. -- I assume you forwarded the copy to Sylvia. I'll send you one after it's printed in a few weeks.