

8/1/72

Dear Sylvia,

This letter requires no answer. I am without complaint that you have not responded to my previous one. I am not engaged in trying to score debating points, not have I ever been, with regard to the current flap or to the best of my knowledge, on other things.

Gary, likewise, has been silent. I am aware that a variety of reasons, good or not, can account for this silence. With what is done not capable of being undone, there is no reason to object.

You have all created fictions about me, my intents and attitudes, and I doubt you can now escape them. You have none sought answers to the questions you have invented, and there is now no point in addressing them. My objectives in this letter are entirely different. As I am sure you realize, I have stayed out. When Howard has asked me questions, I have answered them, taking considerable time for this and as I think he will tell you, not only not pressuring him to agree with me but encouraging him to disagree, explaining that he must do what on the basis of what he at any time knows he thinks he should do. With this I have assured him whatever his decision, it will not influence our regard for him.

So, being out of it, I am restricted to bits and pieces of information and I have no way of knowing how dependable they are in some cases. Some I am confident are accurate, some I must have questions.

Yesterday I received one such report, an account of Cyril's plans when he spends two days at the Archives. As you know, my original questions were of a political nature more than anything else, and my greatest single of several concerns was for what could eventuate and how, if at all, we could cope with a further corruption and burying of truth. You may not agree with this, but one thing by now you must know, regardless of your silence on it, is that Cyril was given nothing I hadn't given him in confidence as soon as I could do it responsibly. I did not sit on my work, I shared it with everyone with whom I could, and to be absolutely certain of my own analysis as it related to the simplest fact, I asked Howard, who has library access I do not, to get me a better version of the human skeleton than I had. As soon as I got it I did phone Cyril. All that was accomplished by this nasty sneakiness behind my back was to make it impossible for me to share work with those no longer doing any and to raise, in my mind at least, the most serious questions about the ethics and minds of those involved. Every Gary's duplication of my work was from another thing I had also given him as a duplicate depository of my material under restrictions he accepted and still acknowledges accepting.

It is my understanding that Cyril plans to spend the first day going over the contract material and the second on other things. These other things, in my view, are of two kinds: those that with serious purposes he would have found time to examine before now; and those he intends to pirate from me, having been informed of them in trust by me, aside from what others may have done. I will take a very dim view of my work appearing over his name in any place, including a scientific journal, and I can conceive of no need other than self-seeking for this when he is going to see this alleged treasure for which all of you have longed.

Now, if he spends one day on this contract material, as I yesterday informed Howard in an analysis I will mail with this, what none of you have done is understand what this really means because none of you have the knowledge and none has taken the time to seek the knowledge he doesn't have. So, let me spell it out. If he can spend a full eight hours on nothing but the film and prints of the autopsy, ignoring all the other evidence that is covered by the contract, which is to say what has not always been available, and if there are no delays, like getting the stuff, taking it to a place for him to go over, springing it out, all the kinds of things that take time at the beginning and of the working day for the Archives employees, and if he and they don't stop for lunch, which would require a repetition of all this time-consuming thing, he would then have much less than two minutes per piece. Aside from study, comparison, tabulations, inventorying and all the other things that should be done, can you conceive of a serious examination of the film alone under these conditions? Frankly, I cannot. Now Cyril has the contract, because I gave it to him long ago. He is capable of simple arithmetic. And if he has done this little planning, need I add comment?



My view, with which you need not agree, is that if this contract material is as precious as you all seem to think, it verges on the sacrilegious to spend a second on anything else. There is nothing at the Archives required for proper understanding of it, most of all not by one of Cyril's credentials. If he wants to Lattimer and spend this kind of precious time on such relics of the past as Zapruder, then I tell you he could for long have seen it here, in ways he can't dream of at the Archives, and from a much clearer point than the Archives has.

I am addressing motive now, not just consequences. As time has past I have been forced to take a much more jaundiced view of what, whether or not consciously, Cyril is really up to. With no reason for it, he kept everything secret from me alone. Not until you pressed him hard did he write me. You may or may not agree with much of what in the always too great haste I long ago wrote him, but he has never replied to any of the serious points that I think even you will acknowledge were in it. When he finally wrote, I did leave the question asked of me open, saying that until the time came it would not be possible for me to give an answer. As you realize, months have passed, and in those months many things have changed. Others have not.

The time I have for this has run out. I must get to other things. Many of you have become part of something you have none analyzed, none thought of as you were all equipped to do. What Jerry has written me is even more immature than he usually is, and never responsive. Aside from him, and you should long ago have asked yourself, given his ignorance, why you had him in on this to begin with. Given his unrecognized but glaring irresponsibility, you should long ago have addressed that of which he is capable, for he is also persuaded that much not true about his knowledge and understanding are true. However, there is one thing with which I do charge all of you. If Cyril does what I now expect, engage in a wholesale cheapskate piracy, you will all be responsible.

My work has long been done. It has what I believe is a proper context. It has what cannot be in the Archives. It puts it all together. Given the serious purposes and dedication of which I so often hear and so rarely see proofs except in idle, self-serving words in the rest of the critical community, this work could have been widely available, and without the liabilities that are now possible. If I do not know what I can do about this eventuality, and if when I first met him this is something of which I would not have considered Cyril capable, I cannot now ignore these signs of intent any more than I could long ago ignore a review of the past. Howard has always had free access to my files, as almost everyone has, and if you think I distort or misrepresent, I urge you to ask him. So, if this does come to pass, whatever I can do I will, and there should be no doubt on anyone's part of the effort I will be capable of. I am personally with much question about my capabilities, but not my intent and desires. With all the work remaining to be done, the last thing we need, and the last thing acceptable from those claiming serious purposes, is conscious duplication, which in plain English is stealing.

You may be unaware of it, and I've no time to review what I sent in my last two letters. The hazard of which I have been writing recently is not one I have just come to see. I have abandoned an enormous amount of my own work because I saw it long ago. This includes several lawsuits it has taken months and months of the most unpleasant labor to prepare. (Parenthetically, I interject that whereas Cyril had indicated he'd help with one, when I called on him for that help he told me forthrightly it would cost him too much money because he was then engaged in so much profitable work he could not make all the money available to him. That bluntly, and you can see the letters. Meanwhile, for such childishness as what you know of on Long John - and can you examine your public silence on this when you were so vocal when the same thing came from Garrison? - and meaningless debates, as with Lucius Burch on Oswald's guilt, in Memphis, he had time.) I then worked out a foolproof way of accomplishing what we want, wrote him about it saying we could do it together, and although it has been perhaps two years, I await any kind of response or inquiry about further details.

As you have to live with the fictions you have invented, and by now some realization of this must have come to you, so also you will have to live with the realities. One of these may be part of a monumental dishonesty. I want to be certain you are not unaware of it. And I most certainly hope I will never have occasion to address it in any way. Hope you are O.K.