

Letters under Striso files

11/23/68

Dear Sylvia,

Many thanks for the copies of Striso's letters. I plan and planned no public use of it at all. However, because of a possibility I am not at liberty to discuss, I had planned to discuss this with Vince. If you have objection, please let preferably both of us know immediately, for I am seeing him Wednesday before either of us would have gotten that day's mail. We are meeting in Baltimore. If you send a carbon to the second of us, if you have objection to my showing these letters to Vince when I show him my own file, one of us should certainly know in time. His letters to you are not inconsistent with those he wrote me. I had deep misgivings about him then. Now they are deeper. He broke off contact with me when I bought nothing he said and brought it to a head by telling him how to meet me.

Memory can be frail, especially after a month-long trip that was very intensive, varied, I think productive, and I assure you exhausting. So I acknowledge my recollection can be faulty. Unless it is, Lifton told me you had sent him copies of my letters. My own opinion of what he is into makes him capable of such a falsehood. However, there is no doubt in my mind at all that he was aware of the correspondence. If my recollection is faulty, I owe you both an apology. I would not have spoken to him had others I trust, like Saul Koch, not asked me to. I am glad to did. He has to be insane to believe and repeat the things he does, and he cannot be innocent to be associated with what he is. Just as I was about to leave yesterday I got a phone call from a "Tempe" reporter whose name I understood to be Reum. He had called me just after deadline to ask confirmation of what Thornley's lawyer had just told him. Naturally, it was wrong, distorted and in part incomplete - and too late to keep it from hurtful publication. Whether they print the truth I can only wonder, but the best it will amount to is the claim I am no longer beating my wife. It was carefully arranged that they could not know the truth in time to have it in the initial story. I can only anticipate another vilification from these angels of purity.

It is now more than a month since I spoke to Lifton. He freely acknowledged he had nothing to go on but Thornley's word and that he accepts it because he regards Thornley as an honest man. I gave him a number of checkpoints, where he could learn for himself whether this is the fact. He also promised to send me certain things. He had been silent. Lifton agrees the Open City picture of Kerry is the way Kerry says he looked the time of the assassination. Why not do what I asked him to do, check that picture with the one we know is of that period, Thornley Exhibit 1, the newspaper picture taken the night he was first interviewed, from the papers.

It is unfortunate no one ever wondered, suppose Thornley is not an honest man, suppose, since what we hear comes from him alone, he is not telling the truth or all the truth? The reporter says they used the phrase "practitioner of witchcraft" describing Barbara Reid to him. This is consistent. I asked for the evidence. He acknowledges none at all. I can tell you this: there was a "voodoo altar" in Barbara's home, the Kerry's knowledge. He helped her build it - for TV! I know she has written a book on voodoo, but nothing else, and there is certainly no evidence she is any kind of a witch. I do not know what Garrison has or knows, but I tell you this: before Kerry's grand-jury appearance, she was not the only person who told me of seeing him and Oswald together. They may all be wrong, but she is not alone, and that cannot be all of Garrison's interest.

However, I am sorry I took Dave's word. I should have known better.

Sincerely,