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5/27/66

Dear Sylvia,

Your letter of 5/25 was awaiting on my return from Frederick. In Washington later today I shall mail this reply, and I'm interrupting what I had scheduled to reply. I believe your concern warrants it.

I have in the past made clear my attitude to what I considered then and still consider premature use of the ergive. From the time Manchester had access to it there was no question in my mind I could also. I stayed away because it was then and even more is now my belief that interest in it would discourage further de-classification. I have done further things with respect to this I do not now have time to go into.

You certainly know that I share your basic philosophy about the approach all of us working on this have. Remember, without knowledge of what you had learned, I gave you access to mine. Remember, like you and without doubt earlier, I offered it to Sauvage. This happened last July, when the Washington correspondent of his paper put us together by phone. You heard me do it again this winter from your own phone.

You also know that until I heard from you, I had no knowledge of anyone else now working on this subject, other than Lane, unless someone had earlier given me the Minority of One, to which I do not subscribe. You also know that except for those things you suggested I add, none basic but all helpful, this book is entirely my own work, a tremendous effort that was completed well before anyone else's. Now I find myself accused by Arnini with plagiarizing the entire thing, and he has had further uncomplimentary things of both a personal and professional nature to say. My reply to his letter restricted itself entirely to fact, and eventually you will learn, I hope from him, exactly how vile he was. In response to my letter, which answered his slanders from the record and with fact, under date of May 20 I received this letter which I will quote you in its entirety:

"Mr. Harold Weisberg, Cooking Chemption (and I have no idea of the source of this, for while it is accurate, it is not on the letterhead I used) etc...I wish to answer to each and every point you made not only in your letter to me but in what is slowly become your notorious correspondence to others. All these answers are: Sire, you are mad." That is the whole letter. What he refers to as my "notorious correspondence" I can only imagine, and I imagine it is Lane, who has backed down in two letters, one I answered earlier and one I received today. Lane has left all my specifications of inaccuracy in his claims and those of Holt stand unchallenged. I told him I had more important and worthwhile things to do than engaged in name-calling (which he initiated and to which I did not reply in kind) and I certainly hope he did. I have not and do not intend to reply to Arnini's letter. I made a pretty broad hint that he not print the correspondence, for that would force me to defend myself in public, which would hurt him, and even now this I do not desire.

I have had a pleasant note from Selandria and answered it in kind, making no reference to his treatment of the FBI report, which I have discussed with you. I even more regard this a a major blunder, and I believe that is the kindest face

I can put on it. You are aware of all of this, for I have gone into it at some length. You know my belief is much worse.

You know I rejected the Norton offer because they demanded I charge conspiracy and organize the book around that. This is not because I have any doubt there was a conspiracy to kill there President, for there is no doubt at all. But I could not, with integrity, charge this conspiracy without charging the minimum of two more that I am confident existed and that my book proves. I need not tell you at what personal cost I did this. Likewise, I could not go into Salandria's use of the FBI report without attacking him with all the strength I could muster for what I believe to be the completely dishonest way in which he handled it. Instead, if you will look at my postscript again, you will find that for no conceivable literary reason I carefully included the date on which I first saw the FBI report, March 30. As the record stands, I have acknowledged, for whatever value it has for him, that Salandria had his use of the FBI report in print before I saw it. I submit if I did anything dishonest, it was only in not clobering him in the book. But I certainly have acknowledged, in the book, that he had it first. I just do not see how he or Arnoni cannot see that I had no other purpose in giving the date, for it served none, my own purposes being accomplished by the use of the phrase that I saw it well after the book was written. You will even find in my letters to Holt disputing Lane's claim I specifically declared I was not the first to see this report.

Further on Salandria, I undertook to introduce his material to Britain, and after I told the correspondent of the London Sunday Telegraph about it he phoned Salandria, got copies of his articles, and sent them to his paper, which was then considering serialization of my book. This is the act of an man who wants to hurt Salandria?

My attitude is the same as yours. I this morning told you of something that is important to me, especially since I may soon be defending myself against God knows what, yet the suppression of the autopsy papers in Document 371 is something, to the best of my knowledge, was my "discovery", to use Lane's word. I told you what I suspect of the films and sent you my carbon on the letter I have not yet delivered. Certainly these things, if none other, establish my attitude. I even told a paper that is doing something about my book about Epstein's, and it may hurt me severely. They had no knowledge of it until I told them, and they have a copy.

Again on Salandria, if you'll compare our quotations of the FBI report. I used what he didn't, and I used what he did other than as he did. Because both he and Arnoni are your friends, possibly at some time you may find it convenient for the lawyer to undertake to explain to the editor the meaning of libel and slander. It may save his publication for him if he assaults others with the venom and irresponsibility he directed at me.

The concluding sentence in my letter of May 19 to Lane is, "I will be entirely satisfied if you will restrain the public inaccuracies." His letter of the 23rd. acknowledges my lecture, also earlier in my letter. He says, "I fully accept the spirit in which you close" and he agrees our effort and "energy be consumed in that effort (to bring out the facts-HW) than in claiming credit for that which still remains undone." He also asks that I call any inaccuracies in his book to his attention, a request that relates to the future. I do not expect him to behave as he promises. I do not plan to answer his letter, either.

I do plan, as soon as I can, to send a copy of my book to McClelland, with a letter asking about his left-temple statement and his testimony. There are two sprays of reddish material from the President's temple, none that could have landed in the car, and one fairly straight to the front that could have come from the left temple. I find the explosion entirely inconsistent with the Humes testimony, but have no way of disputing it with my own knowledge, which is nonexistent. I just cannot see how a bullet in the alleged trajectory could have done it.