

6 April 1966

Dear Harold,

I know you will forgive me if I do not reply to your letters of the 2nd and 4th with reciprocal detail. My busy period at the office has begun and I will be forced to put aside my avocation(s) during the day (and perhaps some evenings and weekends too), in order to do my assignments, first at the Social Commission and then at the Trusteeship Council, which takes me to the verge of July. Fortunately, I don't feel great pressure at the moment about my manuscript and allied questions, so I intend to coast and work on the "case" as and when I have the energy and the leisure. I do get paid well and I want to give value for the money when there is work, especially when I have already taken great advantage of slack periods to work on my personal projects during the office day. This is a general "disclaimer" so that you will understand what may otherwise appear to be lack of zeal or change of attitude, during the next months.

Having made that point, let me add that I have no early plans to visit the archives. I have realized during the last few days that an enormous body of material is now available there and that a day or two will be futile and frustrating. I am now thinking in terms of spending a week or more at the Archives during my four-week vacation, which will be during July—with the proviso that the status quo remains in effect. I still expect radical developments around June or July which may decrease—or increase—the importance of spending time at the Archives.

You asked about Fred Cook's "book"—so far as I know, it is a long article, not a book, and as I recall my brief conversation with him last September (my sole contact with Cook, who is a "loner" by temperament or because of the pressures of his commitments and has never evidenced any interest in parallel research or writing by other Warrenologists)...as I recall, Cook takes the position that there was definitely a conspiracy and that Oswald was definitely implicated or incriminated. I did not have the impression that Cook had done strenuous research—but I may be wrong.

I am very handicapped by being the repository of strictly confidential information, as I have already mentioned, and because of that I cannot comment rationally or with honesty on some of the points you raised—the FBI report, for example. It will all become clear before too long. As for spending \$37.00 for a catalogue, I will avoid that if humanly possible. I am already offended and indignant ^{at} what this has cost me, as a taxpayer and as an individual, and the least the Archives can do is to make the catalogue available at its own expense or at a nominal price...By the way, I had the opportunity a few days ago, unexpectedly, to read Lane's original manuscript, which I understand has been completely rewritten not once but several times. But the ms I saw is what Lane considered his finished product, more or less, and I think it is a shoddy job indeed, in every way (including use of material which I recognized as pirated, and was able to corroborate). I have now read several unpublished manuscripts as well as written my own. Lane's is very very far beneath yours, my own (at least in scholarship and attempted objectivity), and other material I have been able to read at least in part. So far as Bodley-Head is concerned, we seem to have conflicting information: I have heard within the last two days or so that Bodley-Head is definitely issuing Lane's book in England but is trying hard to get some house to pay a healthy amount for the American rights. I am convinced from what I know of Lane and his work that his book will do more harm than good. But I can

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tell you with absolute certainty that Lane's book will not be "first." I wish I was able to elaborate but I am committed to silence and have probably said too much already.

I will not go into Salandria, rather, into your comments on Salandria, which I understand but do not share fully, simply because it would take too much time (it is late already but I must finish this tonight as I will not have time tomorrow). But I will only say one thing—I don't have unalloyed admiration for Frazier but he was a few cuts above some of the other experts; and I don't know Vince Salandria well enough to judge whether he is being "diplomatic" or naive. I would want to hear his own explanation, before reaching any conclusions. (I am, I admit, fond of Vince.)

I am thoroughly mystified ~~about~~^{by} your comment that after talking to me last Tuesday you did something against your own best interest—that worries me. I hope it is nothing serious or irrevocable?

Did you hear from Ramparts? My last news, about five or six days ago, was not encouraging. The publication date is said to be indefinite, but not before July at the earliest, more likely August. By which time, it will be—more prudently, I will say "it may be"—anticlimatic and irrelevant.

Another setback, but not as serious, is the call today from my publisher (if that is not too grandiose). He had told me that the index would arrive from the bindery no later than March 21st but of course that is more than two weeks ago and I have been increasingly troubled and irritated by the bland vagueness of their response to inquiry. Today he had the secretary call me to explain that the shipment was delayed because of the rail strike, will be here within the next few days; also, they have revised the "blurb" after my agitated protest on reading the serious errors in their description of the index—"revised" it by substituting the text I sent in to be used instead of their deformed blurb, which they had failed to clear with me in advance despite my repeated suggestion that they should do so. You are on the mailing list I sent them for publicity about the index.

I am returning your "Postscript" as you requested. I think you can improve and shorten it somewhat. I don't quarrel with your indictment of the FBI but the Commission had the primary and ultimate responsibility—the Commission accepted, and/or suppressed, the FBI report; and paid them generous tribute, etc. Anyhow, the bill of particulars against the FBI has to cover a much, much larger spectrum than the relatively brief and transitory role in this investigation—including its responsibility for the public attitudes and private activities and national policies that led us irresistably to this pass that you rightly call the most odious event in our history.

As usual, I have not succeeded in being as brief as I planned, but now I must really call it a night. Warm regards, as always,

Spencer

⊕ in the USA; I am not really fearful of any "pre-emption" by home even in England.