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6/11/66

Dear Sylvia,

Your letter to the Wash Post is perfect. In mine not for publication I disproved all of Harwood's alleged fact about the FBI report and the silver bullet, but in the one for publication I referred only to the contents of Whitewash, without any reference to the axe job. I sort of expect it in tomorrow's paper.

It is not necessary to reply to my long letter. It was for your information. Had I not wanted you to know, I would not have taken all that time. But we both have better ways of spending our time.

If we but had a few bucks, I'd say things were good. I have good commercial distribution now in most major areas, including west coast, but some of the book were shipped only Wednesday. There are in commercial channels 2751 copies, not counting what has been sold or what we mailed out from here. I'll be on 500 radio stations, have been on DC Columbia station four of scheduled five times, etc. There will be more press. Lifkin phoned late one night re: Ramparts special issue to go to press in about 10 days. Full page in Maryland's largest weekly. Two pages in BOOKS, whose editor, Jerry Age, was wonderful at American Booksellers's convention.

Right now my largest worry is that Viking PR people will not reciprocate on major things, as they did not on Newsweek story. Look is going to elabher Epstein. I have already told Viking I'll do what I can to help. A hasty reading indicates that when he addressed himself to evidence he knew only what the staff lawyers told him, a rather undependable source that led to error. The book nonetheless is very important. I have done all I can to plug it, including sharing my radio with it and praising it to reviewers and stores.

As of today, not a single mention of which I am aware in any of the so-called liberal journals. And I fear the Viking people will be able to deflect interest of major reviewers. Of this there are already indications.

Eighth St. Bookshop will carry. If you get a chance will you please call Best Side Other, suggested by Wilentz of this store, and tell them. I won't have time to write them for several days. Village Voice I did write. I'm expecting two interviewers today and have other things I must do. The grass is more than a foot high and all my mowers, which I'd not have time to use, are broken!

I now have reason to expect additional press in England, France, and am working on something that might be good in France. My English agent is discouraged.

Sincerely,

Quick Memo

7 June 1966

Harold, I appreciate your long letter received yesterday and will try to reply the moment time permits. I did write to the WASHINGTON POST as soon as the story came out, cc enclosed for your information. Subsequently I received a form to sign, so apparently they are considering the publication of my letter to the editor. If you see it (I don't get the Washington papers) --and if time permits--please drop me a line. But I know how busy you are so don't take special trouble. I am glad you feel the need for friendly cooperation among all of us and I know it can be worked out. Best regards, Hastily,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Sylvia", with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.

31 May 1966

The Editor
The Washington Post
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir,

You are to be congratulated on the highly important article by Richard Harwood, concerning the Warren Report, which appeared on Sunday. It is gratifying that responsible discussion of the assassination has resumed for, as Harwood's article shows clearly, several fundamental problems remain unresolved.

The article properly focuses on the critical question of the authenticity of the description of the President's back wound in the FBI Reports of December 9, 1963 and January 13, 1964. The FBI does not seem to have retracted or admitted error. Moreover, Harwood's story provides the significant new information that the FBI confirmed to The Washington Post on about December 18, 1963, that the first bullet to hit the President lodged deep in his shoulder—which is consistent with the FBI rather than the autopsy description of the wound. I cannot readily believe that the FBI was capable of issuing statements and reports so profoundly in error in an investigation of such enormous gravity. The less so, when (1) the FBI Supplemental Report of January 13, 1964 contains internal evidence of a flow of information from the autopsy surgeon, Commander J. J. Humes, to the FBI; and (2) collateral evidence such as the position of the bullet holes in the clothing, and the testimony of witnesses who saw the President's body, suggests that the FBI findings were accurate.

True, Arlen Specter's evidence is scattered through the 26 volumes of Hearings and Exhibits, but the same scattering has fragmented every other major segment of the evidence. That has rendered research more difficult, but not impossible. And in piecing together the evidence on the single-missile theory, one finds that the testimony and documents in no way support Specter's hypothesis but, on the contrary, leave it without ground on which to stand.

I must take issue with Harwood's assertion that Dr. Robert Shaw was convinced that the intact bullet found on a stretcher at Parkland Hospital "did cause the wounds" sustained by Governor Connolly. Dr. Shaw first deposed (on March 23, 1964) that one bullet could have or did inflict all the Governor's wounds. However, when he later appeared as a witness before the Commission, he was shown the stretcher bullet for the first time. As a result, he modified his original opinion, now saying that the Governor's wounds could have been caused by two or even three bullets. (Dr. Shaw's change of opinion is set forth unambiguously in the transcript of his testimony in the Hearings, Volume IV, pages 109 and 113-114.)

It is true, as Harwood says, that Dr. Shaw testified that it was not uncommon for people to suffer a wound without knowing it immediately. Dr. Shaw added, however, the qualification, "but in the case of a wound which strikes a bony substance such as a rib, usually the reaction is quite prompt." (Volume IV, pages 115-116) I am sure that Harwood would agree that, since the Governor's rib was shattered by the bullet that struck his chest, Dr. Shaw's qualifying remark should not have been omitted. Moreover, at least two other medical witnesses declined to support the alleged delayed reaction by the Governor (see Volume II, page 376, and Volume V, pages 93-94).

The inconsistencies in the record are not "apparent;" they are real.

Yours very sincerely,

Sylvia Meagher
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