

1/24/85

1/24/85

As you may have gathered, I've been busy, as I remain, and I weary faster. We've had a rough bout with weather. Today was the first time I've been able to get Mill to a medical appointment cancelled twice by weather, and to do any shopping, from bird feed to groceries. While awaiting her I read your 1/19, then your Z article, at first in the cold and didn't think to go inside zippered jacket for a pen, which I did later. There is more I would say about it than I've now time for but I'm making a separate file of it and perhaps when you are here again we can go over it. I'll make a few general comments and a few from recollection. But I think it might be helpful to you in the future if we both went over it together with care. One reason is if you do such things in FOIA litigation you'll be ruined. Please take this seriously, not personally.

Re vintage Valiant: when new cars, particularly imports, would not start, even with jumper cables, it never failed. Most bitter days I went out only to start it and keep old battery up. Yesterday and today only days I was able to use it to get to my daily therapy because of windchill. Monday not a single car in local medical transportation that is new would start, even with jumpers, but I was lucky they had an old olari and got to my necessary blood testing only an hour late!

Agreed on Weberman. I had no idea of content. Never dependable.

Re Ferrie: I heard many reports that he had been a CIA contract employee and at first credited them. Ditto on him as Marcello's pilot & from people who knew F well. I'll return to this in a different way but in short I am now inclined to believe they'd not risk having anything to do with him knowingly. If Marcello needed a pilot I'm inclined to believe that those without Ferrie's liabilities were readily available to him. He might have used Ferrie to fly him, perhaps. Which gets to your questions that if to be used as affirmative statements must be reversed: "Ferie wasn't Marcello's pilot for a time? What would be the 'proof' that someone was a contract agent for the CIA and where it be obtained?" Difficult if not impossible to obtain and thus there is a question of responsibility in making any affirmative conclusion, absent something really probative. Frankly, I don't know what need either CIA or Marcello had for Ferrie, unless M decided to risk him for a personal trip, which is not impossible. But also is far from established fact.

Do I agree that the intelligence community silences people in clusters, which should be in quotes. No, I do not, and not because they are not capable of such deeds but for other reasons, ranging from seeing to it that the need does not exist to the considerable dangers if done. You have too much been influence by the prevailing fictions about the spooks and spookeries. Individual cases is a different matter, and the inherent dangers are reduced and more easily or less uneasily dealt with. I am aware of real questions re Paisley, don't know enough about the others, but Russell as assassinated is bullshit. So is the new Watergate fiction about him, by an artist in that commodity. And in this is one of many who misdirect attention and inquiry. Which I regard as serious, particularly for us, we've suffered much from this.

I know Oliver Patterson well, although I've not heard from him for a while. It is not unlikely that he sent you copies of what I got and gave him, from the FBI. He had been an FBI informer and over his objections it turned him over to HSCA. Jerry Day brought him here after I spotted him as an informer, with Jerry refusing to believe me, we got along well and he became a source for me. He did spy on Jerry for HSCA before coming here. I loaned what I got, with his cooperation, to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch and they got and syndicated widely four page-one stories, sensational, but with nothing substantial to do with the King case. Oliver remains a luftmensch, but to me an amiable one. He once showed up in a blizzard when I was speaking at a southern Illinois college, in my audience, having driven through the blizzard with his girlfriend, just to be with me, and blew the kids' minds by getting up when I spoke and identifying himself. Can you imagine the impact on your students? Or my surprise!

I'm telling the kids about the denial of Ray rights when Oliver gets up and I recognize him for the first time and confesses that he's the one who did it! He has a sense of the dramatic and god knows what kinds of good deals he can get for you on almost anything. I don't think he'd cheat you but I never took him up on any of his offers. But I doubt very much that he has or can provide any information about the case itself and his spying on counsel is now well known and I used it in the FOIA litigation as the papers also did at the time.

In your Z paper you conjecture and after a few repetitions present your conjecture as fact, which it isn't, and there are substantial doubts about your conjecture's reasonableness. You conjecture need, causation, everything, with few facts and then depend on special interpretations of a few of the facts. In all of this you reflect ignorance of what was published and of wasting much time as a result. For example, the Barrett report you found very late and the CIA's request for a Z copy for "training" I published in facsimile in late 1966 and early 1967, respectively, and the NPIC stuff I published, with significant information you missed while looking at the records from which I used only a selection, when I reprinted Photo WW, I think in 1976. You missed and make no mention of the CIA's photoboards, which indicate that in addition to the calculations they had visuals to illustrate. This is, I believe, a very serious oversight, particularly with your theorizing. Which, if I am to be a real friend and try to be helpful, I must tell you is untenable and purposeless. The latter in the real world, not novelist's concepts of spooking. You lack a basic understanding of the basic tenets and practices of spooking and spookeries and of the CIA's basic policy re the assassination: detachment to the degree possible, volunteering absolutely nothing, withhold all possible and more while pretending utmost in both cooperation and care. Moreover, with the instant and known determination to go with a lone assassin, later made into a lone nut assassin, the last thing any agency wanted was evidence. (Which is a word you misuse, giving it a meaning it does not have and giving meaning to what you say that is not evidence.)

As in the ~~firm~~ FBI, the CIA's law is cover the agency's ass and the second is cover your own. Nobody was about to undertake what you conjecture as a self-starter, which would be utterly and irremediably ruinous, personally and organizationally, and absent some exceptionally important reason, the agency was not about to go off on its own in such a case. If it has it would have been suspect right away and it knows its own business too well to do that.

In your conjecture about the Z hegrins you've omitted too much of what was known in support of a purposeless project that appears to be attractive to you. It was not possible for the original to have been flown to DC as soon as you say and returned that night and there was no need absent an official request from the FBI or Secret Service, of which, under those circumstances, the CIA would have and have used a cover-our-ass record. In addition, you can't really believe that they were not aware of the high degree of probability of bootleg copies, of which there were many and at which they have always been expert and adept. They know it is done, they do it when they have had, and they'd never run any such risk.

Other areas in which you lack knowledge relate to rifle shooting and timing, making copies of that kind of 8mm film, particularly what is not seen on projection but exists on the original, scoop journalism and access to Life's files and secrets, real or imagined. Business, too, because Zapruder was not in a position to guarantee that there had been no bootleg copies, which were made before he got his film. Also were the acknowledged copies were and when they were there. (Even the FBI made bootleg copies - and denies it. But I know he had one and where and to whom shown, from one who was there. But I'd never be able to prove it to anyone who didn't want to believe it.) Life would not, under any circumstances, permitted or wanted an NPIC interpretation prior to its publication and then would not have risked one afterward. It

bought, wanted and exercised the right to say what it wanted to say and to make money thereby. It even decided before the film got to New York some of what it wanted to use from it, stopped the original off in Chicago to make black-and-white copies for that purpose, and used them. (And remade that issue a number of times, too!)

The only possible meaning of the notation of Life's solution or interpretation is of quotation or citation. Not an NPIC suggestion. That dates the notes. Period.

It was not necessary to know the precise speed of the camera for initial photo-interpretation because it is standard and in even inexpensive cameras varied little. Witness the error or deviation in Z's of 0.3 from the standard 18. Insignificant, one of your errors based on a lack of understanding of shooting and timing and of the maximum the FBI claimed for Frazier's shooting. From the first moment everyone knew that the shooting attributed to that rifle only was impossible. Meaning everyone who knew anything about rifles and those in official positions. To this day the world's best experts have never been able to duplicate it.

By going into much too much you diluted everything you said and your basic point becomes more untenable and unproven. Moreover, the fact is that the CIA did use the 1965 copy it got from Life for training purposes. Intending this, if it had any copies, it dared not use them because their existence thus would be known. That copy was used in an area of your own interest, training local police!!!

Early on one of the Secret Service copies remained with Zapruder, and SS took people to his office for him to project it, he told me. The FBI for a while had its other copy.

As of the time you conjecture the CIA played games with the original, a great danger considering the existence of copies, and it would have assumed bootlegs, there was no way for it to know a) that it had a need to doctor anything or b) what to doctor.

While you may be correct, you have no way of knowing whether the prints referred to are motion pictures and there is what you missed, the fact that they did make stills for their display board(s)

You also misinterpret, based on your misinterpretation of the reference to Life. NOIC was asking how Life could know the time of the first and second shots, and it is a legitimate question.

Life knew that SS had two copies because that was the original deal. No mystery.

You conjecture that Z's camera was tampered with. To what end? And what would the result have been when the film was thereafter projected? What would be tampered with? The spring? Do you think that the CIA kept a stock of B&H amateur camera replacement parts on hand? Or that it would risk the FBI catching something of that nature and knowing how Hoover detested the CIA?

Please believe me, Phil, I've taken this time and been this blunt in an effort to be helpful. Otherwise I'd just have ignored the piece. You really do not want this kind of thing and your name on it. You also do not want the FBI and other agencies tearing it apart behind the scenes more than I have, and I am working from recollection and am am sure there is more.

The one place in all of this where you were solid you were not aware of what had been published and failed to make use of it and it is the thing to which you should have stuck, that and not informing the WC or anyone else. You might also have found a few choice words to address Berlin and his fink Olsen, who had that info. and didn't mention it. Or the WC, FBI not using NPIC, etc. etc. You'd have had something. What you need is to be your own devil's advocate and ^{rethink} ~~rethink~~ your scarcely hidden underlying thinking. Excuse the haste. I want to be helpful but must get to other things.

Best Harold

Jan 19, 1984

Dear Harold,

Enclosed is my 2-film piece. Thanks for your 1/15/84 comments, data, and criticisms. I don't know, off hand, anyone who wants a vintage Valient, but I will ask around. I had sent the copies of the stuff Ray sent me just in case you didn't have it; I didn't send the Weberman items because I thought them worthless considering their source (if you do want them, I'll send them).

Ferris wasn't Marcello's pilot for a time? What would be the "proof" that someone was a contract agent for CIA and where it be obtained? Aside from specific, individual cases (and aside from ~~Ray~~ Penn Jones' ~~is~~ express) don't you agree that the intell. community silences people in clusters? or individual cases — Parsley, Mulkahey, Dubesterin, Lou Russell, ? Does Sylvia Meagher go to far, in your view?

I had a call from Oliver Patterson and he sent me a big packet of stuff (because Ray told him I was not a fan of Blakey). Do you know anything about Patterson's role with HSCA or the Ray brothers? or about Patterson himself?

Thanks.

Best regards,

Phil