

12/23/67

Dear Mr. Murr,

I've just returned from some work in New Orleans, hence the delay in responding to your letter of the eighth and in thanking you for the very attractive matched cuff-links and tie clasp. I do appreciate them. This is something I did not have. As a matter of fact, having lived in the country so long and having less need for dressing as one customarily does in the city, I'd mislaid most of the personal jewelry I had and have been wearing a tie-clasp that, unidentifiable to city folk, is actually an ad! Your gift is attractive indeed, and useful, but I think most of all I appreciate it because you thought of it. I do, sincerely, thank you very much.

Please excuse the haste in this response, for the accumulation of unanswered letters towers.

Similas' behavior is strange. He may have explained it but I am inclined to doubt it. I have not heard from him. At this point, I am not going to initiate contact. If he has no interest in what I wrote of him he either has it or has misgivings. I'd rather see how he acts.

What you have done is fine. Of the things you can do, however, I'd think spending more time and money on him is not one of the most promising.

When you first told me of your efforts with Similas I immediately wrote a colleague, Richard Sprague, c/o The University Club, One West 54 St., New York, N.Y. 10019. Dick has been specializing in the photographic evidence, as you may recall from PHOTOGRAPHIC WHITEWASH, and has done remarkably with it. I think possibly you and he might well get together on this. He may get to Chicago in the course of his work, and contact the AP, or, if he so suggests, I can have a friend there do this when you and Dick think it appropriate.

What you propose to do with a tape recorder and map is a good procedure. Perhaps Dick has a map that shows the positions of those he has identified. Ray Marcus, of Los Angeles, made an excellent one some time ago. I can send you my copy of that. It is larger than the printed exhibits.

I am taking the liberty of sending Dick a copy of this exchange of letters to help the two of you make contact. You have done as well with Similas as he permitted.

You are, of course, welcome to copies of the documents you'd like. The only problem is time, the time to copy them. You can get them from the National Archives, but the charge there is 20 cents a page, and this mounts up. I still hope that it may be possible to bring out the complete edition of this book, which would include them. Unless your need is urgent, why not wait and see if this is to happen? In the meantime, if anyone visits me who can run the copy machine, I'll write and see if you then want the copies, for it will take a full day to make them.

Again, I do thank you for your kindness and thoughtfulness, very much.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

F.P. 1,
Moffat, Ont.,
Dec. 8th, 1967.

Dear Sir,

I recontacted Mr. Similas per your instructions. I explained to him what you said about a possible saleable market concerning his pictures. He appeared to be quite interested, but then explained to me something which he said he did not reveal to me in our earlier discussion. He said he is presently involved in and has been for about 2yrs. with an ~~American branch~~ Canadian branch of an unnamed American publishing company in an effort to produce a "kit" type article of his impression etc. of the assassination. He said this kit would contain Similas's photo's, photostatic copies of articles pertaining to him from the Dallas Herald Tribune, New York Times, and other papers. There would also be a 33rpm recording of portions of the tapes he made in Dallas, Chicago, and Toronto as well as maps of the area. He stated that they had hoped to have had the kit published this year, but do to various difficulties that the projected date was for the 5th anniversary or late next summer. They were in his ~~opinion~~ opinion starting with a first printing of some 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ million copies with projected sales of 12-17 million. He said the cost would be \$4.50.

I asked him to write you a narrative with a description of where he was standing, Ruby's club etc. However he stated that because of this other commitment he would not be able to write you and give out any information. I pressed him further and explained how I was having a rather difficult time in finding his presence in any of the published photo's of the assassination. The only other clue he would give me as to his position was that he was standing next to a negro male in a white trenchcoat in the plaza area on the south side of Elm street. He said that after the shooting he went to the north side of Elm street to the cement walkway and up the steps to the grassy knoll.

One of the first things that Similas asked me when I recontacted him was about your book PHOTOGRAPHIC WHITEWASH. I gathered that he had been trying to buy it here in Canada. When I explained that he would have to write you directly to obtain a copy he at first had no reply. I stated that as a man who had been in Dealy Plaza on Nov. 22 and had been completely ignored by the Warren Commission that he should not be without a copy of your book. I further explained how you had devoted a goodly portion of your book to him and had played him straight. When I started to quote to him from some of the FBI reports and explained how they were trying to make him seem unreal and undependable he became extremely interested. He said he would like to obtain or see some of these reports as they might possibly add to his kit project. He then finally agreed to a meeting with me at which time I told him I would bring my copy of PHOTOGRAPHIC WHITEWASH for him to peruse. Well since that time the man has failed to appear for two lunch dates which he himself set up and I agreed to meet him at. On both occasions I have driven some 60-70 miles to the downtown area of Toronto but to no avail.

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After his failure to show the second time, I attempted to contact him by phone some 5 or 6 times, calling long distance everytime. On each occasion his wife answered and stated that he was not home. I do not believe that he is deliberately trying to ignore me as he is presently involved as a partner in an insurance company and does business between Toronto and Hamilton and therefore has to travel quite a bit. In fact on 2 occasions when I called his wife explained how he was going to be in Hamilton for the day and would not return until late at night. In each case I left him a phone number at which he could contact me no matter what the hour of his return. No answer. However I finally contacted him last night. In fact I got him out of bed. When I called his wife stated that he had just gone to bed. I explained how important it was to him and me that I talk to him. He finally came to the phone. He was a little upset but I explained how I also was at his failure to meet me at his pre-designated places. He apologized and stated that he had been out of town and could not reach me. He stated that he would contact me later this week. I made him first agree that I be allowed to come to his house and interview him and get him to mark a few maps that I have prepared to show his whereabouts and movements in the Plaza at the time of the shooting. He agreed and I am now waiting for his call.

I am hoping to get a taperecorder for the interview in order to put on tape what he has to say. I will send you copies of the maps and the tape if and when the interview ever comes off. I also gave him your name and address. If he does not write you, I think it might be a good idea if you could contact him about PHOTOGRAPHIC WHITEWASH as he appeared awfully interested in it. Similas's address and phone number follow:

124 CHELMSFORD AVE.,
WILLOWDALE, ONT., CANADA

phone; area code 416/221-6606

I hope you are not disappointed in what I have done so far, but I personally feel that I may have failed in my attempts with Similas. He has, however, not been too cooperative.

The only place where I think that Similas may appear in a picture is in the now published prints of Wilma Bond in Life and The Saturday Evening Post. In Miss Bond's last picture as printed in LIFE there is a man in a brown suit standing perfectly erect holding something in his hands at about his stomach level. This man is at the left edge of the picture. It may be Similas. Also in the POST article about Josiah Thompson's book this man is in the Bond picture at the left edge. (Pg. 29). On the same page, the last frame from the movie film showing Miss Will running up the steps, there is what appears to be a negro in a white trenchcoat getting ready to cross the road. He is at the right hand edge of the film. This again could be the man whom Similas said he was standing next to. I will attempt to find these things out from him when I contact him again. Do you know whose film the last frame in the POST article came from? Could it be part of postman Mark Bell's film?

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I would like to ask a favour of you if I could. Could you possibly send me copies of suppressed FBI, Secret Service, and other reports that you used in OSWALD IN NEW ORLEANS? I would like to have some of these reports very much. I am using your book to help build up my own file on Oswald and his connections with the CIA. I will gladly pay the cost of the copying etc. I hope to be able to make a couple of trips to Washington in the coming year to have a look around the Archives and possibly to visit you. Also do you have any tentative dates for publication of future books? I hope so and I am looking forward to your next book.

Yours truly

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Gary Beer". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name "Gary Beer".