

Rt. 12, Frederick, Md. 21701
10/5/75

Mr. John Crewdson
The New York Times
1920 L St., NW
Washington, D.C.

Dear John,

While my wife retypes some copy the actual length of which I must know before I continue the work of preparing POST MORTEM for printing, I write to add to the message I left for you last night and to convey a few thoughts I had after we talked.

If I were working on the leak of the Oswald letter to the FBI one of the first questions I'd ask myself has to do with the timing. While I have other ideas on this I do not have time for and you do not need for a story, the secret was kept almost 12 years by many people. The leaking coincides with Gordon Shanklin's retirement. Maybe this is no more than coincidence but I would not (and do not) assume it. If I were going to try to carry this forward I'd have some interest in a man Mo will describe to you as one who drove two Lincoln Continentals on a reporter's salary. I put it this way to tempt you to talk the whole thing over with Mo. It is Hugh Aynesworth. He is back on the Times-Herald, which broke the story under Tom Johnson's by-line. It is my information that the actual leaking was by Bill Alexander. I have no confirmation. He did hate the FBI, they did have to investigate him for a sordid bit of commercialism of the JFK assassination that did involve Aynesworth and in the course of it they made what he must have taken as nasty cracks about Alexander's earlier life. I have the FBI reports. They refer to having his fingerprints or a criminal record, something like one of these. A reporter tells me it is because Alexander beat his first wife.

There may be a relevance to your current interest in what Alexander gave Aynesworth who sold it to LIFE. It is prejudicial, indicating Oswald may have been pro-Russian, and that he hated the U.S. It certainly supports the reports you have gotten that the counter-intelligence people did not trust Nosenko, if only by what they would regard as reason not to believe what he said and they didn't want to believe.

I do hope you keep full notes on what you are doing and carbons in the event your stories are edited. After you write what you will and go on to other stories, this is all going to come back. I, of course, have my own interests in this. And I won't see what is printed unless others send it to me, as some friends often do from the earliest Times, which they get daily but not Sunday.

I appreciate your suggestions, the time you took for them and your not trying too hard a sell. One of the factors controlling my thinking and decision is that this has not been possible in the past. News decisions in the areas in which I work have been policy decisions. Recently, too. You read the 1/22/64 executive session transcript I gave to the Times and the Post the end of April and both refused to use. Later, when AP did a good story on it, both papers and the Starz killed it. Elsewhere, with the Magaguez for competition, it was page one. You may not agree with me that it is perhaps the most significant single new information about the Warren Commission but I do think you will agree it is a story.

The reason I have done all this work is to get it out, not to keep it in files. I would welcome any help I can get. But at this point, after a dozen unpaid years and no retirement income ahead, if I do it means, among other things, that sooner or later my capability of continuing the work will end. As I told you, it is my only convertible asset. There is academic demand for it as a special archive, too.

Publicity per se means nothing to me, as you may remember from Memphis. There I was never on camera and would say nothing for any use. It also means nothing to me unless it helps get my books around. When they are not in commercial channels, this means unless people know how to write me. Radio stations do that. No newspaper has yet. So I had this situation with the fourth of the Whitewash series: international front-page news from three syndicated stories and no way any one reader could learn how to get the full work. This means nothing to me personally, does not help me do the work I do and does not help get the full printed work around to people.

This fourth is the only one of which the Times did not have an advance copy. By then I had had to do the unorthodox: no free press copies. The money to print it was borrowed and had to be paid back. (It has been, without commercial distribution.) So, with the single exception of Mo, to whom I owed a party when I needed relaxation, all press copies were paid for. Unheard of? (Mo got two. The first didn't reach him. If he got the second, he did no story or it wasn't printed.)

The realities of my life made me hold that book for two months after printing. Among these realities is the work I had to do on the Ray case from September into November. Unless I did this I'd not have had time to mail any out. Or sell any.

This is but one aspect of what is so foreign to others who write.

With this new book I will have to do much the same. However, I will not have need to hold it. I want it out as fast as possible. I regard it as by far the most definitive, irrefutable and a rounded package. I will be giving it to the Senate. Unlike orthodox ^{books} ~~books~~, which depend on unseen citations, this has in addition to them about 200 pages of facsimiles, only a fraction of the relevant I have put together. I will also be willing to make what I can available on a hold basis. I am willing to take my chances on whether any story includes enough for its readers to reach me. This would apply to you, Mo or both and I'll be saying the same thing to others who have written honestly about this subject lately. But the conditions of access will not be good. Until I have printed copies I'll have none to spare except xeroxes of most of the book and an NCR copy of the newest part. I also have a xerox of the appendix. I just don't have the money to make extra xeroxes for the press. It costs 13¢ a page here and there are 660 pages. Or will be. All I can offer in advance is access here. I do think it is loaded with stories. I'd love to sell some, as I've indicated.

I don't know when I'll have printed copies but I expect before the end of next month. Maybe a little earlier. It will sell for \$10.00 plus 75¢ insured mail. I'd rather not sell than have all the time wasted by complaints over non-delivery, so I'm specifying insurance.

I'd welcome any commercial book interest in any of my work. The last thing I want to do is continue or extend my debt and mail books out. All my experiences, including a number I recall with Random House, tell me that until a publisher is willing to come to me and begin with an offer that commits him to make a real effort it is a waste of time to approach any. I so wish it were not this way! If I had nothing else to do I could have a draft of Agent Oswald in a little over a month. I believe it would make a successful, newsworthy book. It is my personal work, not the Warren Commission's. Their's was a non-investigation. In what time I have after Post Mortem is out I'll finish this before I return to the Watergate book, most likely.

It has been years since I approached a foundation, with experiences that tell me it is a waste of time if I do it personally. Yet I cannot give away the one thing that might attract a foundation. Someone may yet find one interested and willing for me.

However, I will take what time I can, as I always have, for any help I can give reporters. If there is any way in which I can be of help to you, I'll be away several days this coming week but I expect to be home for supper every night. I'll be leaving on a short speaking trip the 19th. While I don't credit the angle you are working on, I am for all angles being worked thoroughly. It is the only way we get truth. I do not mean to question the honesty of your sources. I do regard them as biased. Best,