

JL:

11/28/76

Attached memo on yesterday's meeting with Jean-Michel Charlier

The form represents my feeling after he left, continuing this morning and Lil's. I asked her this morning.

It is encouraging. He also did react favorably to my insistence on fact rather than conjecture, to my addressing of conjecture and how little it can really mean if one has a responsible end product in mind (I did not once mention this), and to the specifics I used in responding.

There is, we think, a good possibility of something worthwhile emerging from this if he controls what will emerge. I think he is now thinking in terms of the immediate assignment only. It is my intent when he returned to try to broaden the focus of his mind's lense and his project's cameras.

I have already arranged for him to be able to have as good a Zapruder print as there is outside of two other than the original. I already have one of these two. I have arranged the financial details that make them easily within his reach while under conditions that are fair to the others involved. The actual costs are in his terms quite nominal, so I believe there can be more than the costs in cash alone in what he can do easily.

However, it is the clear impression Lil and I reached independently that lead me to make my skinny notes more in the form of a journal entry than bare-boned notes. I omitted much. We did not until 11:30, late for him, a stranger in a strange area of a country with which he has only limited familiarity.

Perhaps I have finally met the one who can provide two things together, not one of both only: a willingness to deal with hard fact and regard it as either newsworthy or show-worthy; and an ability to do something with the result of it all.

I am not worried about about his reluctance to disclose his knowledge of the French spook involvement and am encouraged by his matter-of-fact latter admission of personal knowledge and conversation with Lamarre. I passed that off without sign of recognition and as completely normal.

I do not know if when he left he had in mind how entirely different than he had expected the evening to be it had been. I think that at some point before he returns he will be aware. He will seem to see if by now he has not already that I showed him all the visuals he needs for a spectacular but absolutely solid special that can be sold internationally. I am inclined to believe that his abrupt shift in dates, his saying he wanted to see me again in what amounts to no more than after two working days, on the fourth day ahead, represents his recognition of the potential.

If this is true then I think it is premature to assume that he has total control. If he does return to France for only a day or so it seems not unreasonable to believe it might be for conferences on this only, aside from details of what he may have run into elsewhere. He could do this by phone, of course, but he might prefer not to and he might have other needs for being there.

I'm conjecturing with guarded optimism but I do feel that there is reason for some optimism.

He took all the books except Oswald in New Orleans with him. He has heard some excerpts from the executive sessions. He kept uttering such words as "incredible." He sees what I'm sure Europe wants, political content that is safe and rational. When we meet again and he has had time to think it through for himself I have in mind making the larger proposal if he does not.

If it turns out to be possible and if it can be done rapidly enough and if it can be used in this country, many ifs, it can have some influence on the Congress and its wrong-headed and wrong-running committee and the disinformation efforts against it. If you think of this you will see that it is no more than I proposed to the committee more than three times and ways, the three being twice to Downing, though Feeney and Bud when both asked (Bud twice), and then directly to Syrague. Agreement was meaningless.

When Jean-Michel Charlier phoned from the State-^{Hilton} about noon yesterday his purpose was for me to send him a copy of Frame-Up in time for him to take to France when he leaves tomorrow and to ask if I would speak to him when he returns in February. When I told him the book could not possibly reach him in time he asked if I could go to Washington Monday. I told him I could not. However, I invited him here.

When? he asked.

My "anytime beginning now" response apparently disconcerted him because he appeared not to know how to respond. I assured him that our only arrangements for the day were social, that if I were not willing to be helpful to him I'd not be inviting him, that I was sure I could be of help to him, and that there would be no intrusion into our plans ^{for} with dinner with old friends if he came. I told him I did not have to ask my wife and that he should bring any co-worker, companion or if she were travelling with him his wife. Although he was at first reluctant he agreed, saying he would be here about 5. I gave him directions and he wrote them down.

At the end of what was a fairly long conversation I suggested strongly that if he had no other obligations it would be a good idea to come as soon as he could because once here he might want more time than he had.

Ian and Crispina McDonald were here. They and Lil were about to leave to do some shopping. Kim Gorr was due in about 5 on her return from Thanksgiving with her parents in Erie. She was to overnight. The McDonalds were baby-sitting an exceptionally bright 2 1/2 year-old girl Annie Johnson so her parents would be free to attend a wedding and the party after it. I was working on correspondence and filing.

Kim decided to make the trip without a break. She rolled in almost as soon ~~the~~ as the shopping expedition left. I had then just begun to respond to a full pound of mailing from John Larry Ray, from the federal prison in Marion, Ill.

Kim was leaving instead of remaining to meet a late ^{early} train on which her roommate was returning to college and her boyfriend's plane in the a.m. This and the need to return Annie for early bedding led Lil to set supper for 5, the time the Charliers were due. When they were not here on time the women went ahead with the meal. "The French are never on time, English Ian explained.

After the meal the others left, Lil and I sat back to ~~irax~~ relax, I to think of what I'd do for the rest of the night. I had just poured a drink and returned to a chair with it when I saw headlights coming in the lane. It was the Charliers, with apologies and explanations I did not comprehend through his accent. They demurred when I asked if they had eaten, we insisted and they indulged an apparent excellent appetite, their consumption ample indication of their sincerity in praising Lil's cooking. As talked while they ate, We then continued talking until 11:30, when they left.

It was a day on which nothing that was planned was done. It was the kind of day that was not interfered with by not going on schedule. Of all I'd planned I was able to do only one thing, go to the post office for a certified mailing from a source on the CIA's behavior-modification and mind-bending experiments.

Michel, as he prefers to be called, is a very large man six feet or more and of exceptional girth. His trousers do not reach his waists. ~~His jacket is so large it seems that he cannot button his jacket.~~ His stomach is so large it seems that he cannot button his jacket.

From his day he is producteur-delegue of Radio-Diffusion-Television Francaise. From his conversation he has made many specials in the United States.

On one, J. Edgar Hoover, he interviewed Deke DeLoach. He says DeLoach told him that he was in charge of the King assassination investigation, that Ray was a pidgeon in it, and that black militants were behind it. He promised me a tape of this interview. In it DeLoach also described King's visit to Hoover's office. Hoover had his King dossier prominently in view. DeLoach told Michel that once King had seen the bulk of the dossier on himself he moderated his attacks on the FBI.

What interested me is the FBI's belief there had been a conspiracy and that Ray was only a pidgeon, meaning not the assassin.

The evening also did not go as planned. Michel altered his plans while he was here for much more than the hour he'd indicated. Instead of coming back in February he wanted to know if when he returns next week we can get together. I told him after the 2d, when Jim and I are in court again. This makes it appear that he is not returning to France of is going for about overnight because the first, the day he asked about, is only two days after his scheduled flight.

He had already interviewed Downing. By the new committee's chairman he was assured that Castro killed JFK.

He did little talking about the King assassination, most about the JFK one.

In the course of this he explored who did it. I would only in terms of who had an interest, making it clear that while many could have had an interest they were not all assassins and that there is no real basis for elimination. During this discussion he asked about oil men. This reminded me of Farewell America and I mentioned it and Lamarre. He seemed to have only a very hazy knowledge of it when I first mentioned it. He knew the original title was L'Amérique Brule. I traced its history a little more because it is a French venture and we went on to other topics. When he asked about a clear print of the Zapruder film I returned to this to tell him an excellent one is available in France. Here he was direct in acknowledging his personal knowledge.

My impression when I first mentioned Farewell America, with details that linked Lamarre to oil and the corporate and printing and distribution history, with names and places, was that he was fudging, that he knew more than he let on. We had talked for several hours when I returned to Lamarre and his excellent print and the transparencies

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he had shown me in New Orleans. "Lamarre has two prints, "I told him, "One is a ~~copy~~ copy of the made-up one Life gave him to be able to trace his leaking of it, the other he says he got from the Kennedy family."

"From Robert, he told me," Michel responded, dropping all pretense of having no personal knowledge.

"He is SDECE," I said. Michel acknowledged this. I went no farther with the French intelligence intrusion into the Garrison operation except to explain briefly my connection with ending the prospects of the movie Farewell American prior to the Shaw trial and the lack of need for it at the trial because Bethel has stolen the case summary for the defense.

However, he does not want, does not want to ask for or thinks he cannot get the SDECE print. I offered to lend him mine, the antecedents of which I told him, or to try to obtain a good one in 15mm of the slow-motion, which I recommended as better for his purposes.

He seems to have turned on strongly. I think it was the manner in which I responded and ~~explained~~ conspiracy, separate from who conspired, his interest. I told him that no matter how complicated lawyers try to make conspiracy appear to be it is simple, no more than a combination in an illegality. The complication is in proving who conspired, not that there had been a combination to do wrong. In this case it was already established by my work and official evidence I had obtained that 1) the assassination was not committed as official alleged and 2) it was beyond the capability of a single man. To this I added proof of the official knowledge of both in the sense of that being a subordinate and later official conspiracy into which I went in terms of political mood of the moment and not thereafter changed when the need disappeared. I showed him illustrations in Post Mortem. On the lack of Commission innocence, where he thought Boggs in particular was innocent - so I think the nuts had had his car - I read from the executive session transcripts of 1/22/64 and 1/27. It obviously astounded him, as he showed in face as much as words.

When he phoned I'd told him I could provide him with visuals, including official documents never seen on the tube. Before he left he said that when he returned he would like to obtain the pictures I had shown him, that he would pay me for this and that he meant not for copies only but that he would pay me well. I agreed. I think he sees the possibilities of the formula I have had in mind since proposing it to CBS in the winter of 1965-6 and of the visual evidence I have if not also the history of obtaining this evidence. I can see no reason for his having lied in saying he had to return to France tomorrow, 11/29, or in saying he would be back in February to shoot. When he then asked about our getting together again in the first, which is only the third day after he had said he was flying the ocean, although I said nothing I took this as an indication of his recognition of these TV possibilities and an interest in using them.

He has a good grounding in what is generally believe about the JFK assassination. I did not ask him all he had interviewed.