

2/15/73

Dear Art,

A little over three weeks ago I mailed you a letter I asked you to forward or deliver to Dalton Trumbo. I've heard nothing from you or from him. I don't know the man, but I do know his early writing and history, and I have a notion that he'd have made some kind of response to what I wrote.

Life is full of coincidences.

Yesterday I was talking to a friend, a professional man, whose daughters do not enjoy reading. I had suggested to him that they borrow our copy of The "Remarkable Andrew, a truly great work by Trumbo (are you too young to remember it?). He was not familiar with the book or Trumbo, so I suggested that he read it first.

A few minutes ago I had a call from a friend who tells me that the Sunday Times had a brief note that Trumbo is doing a script on the JFK assassination. I know none of the details.

Maybe it is a work of fiction. I don't know that, either.

But I do know that this is a great writer, a man who has done wonderful work, and I know that most of the people who profess to know much about the JFK assassination do not, live a fictional life about it, and tell themselves that they alone do, really, understand, thus alchemizing hope and dreams into what for them is reality.

Then there are those who are sick, who do not know they are sick and who are not recognized as sick by others.

But real, original work? What has been done by very few. If it is possible that there are those I do not know, it is unlikely. Most of those who make loud noises fall within the definitions with which I began.

If you remember our phone conversations when you were in New Orleans for the Shaw trial and I had refused to stay there for it, then you know I will not be part of what I do not trust or believe in. And you should also know that I was then right. My recent life teaches me that to be right is a great crime. I suppose this sounds a bit paranoid, but I have dealt with almost everyone who had professed any significant interest in the JFK assassination and I know most as few do. This includes several who are in your area and who have tried to set me up.

I have several concerns and thus I write you again.

First of all, did you get the letter to him? It has not been returned to me.

Second, I don't want another Shaw fiasco to further bury truth.

And I don't want Trumbo who, from his writing and history I consider a beautiful man, to get under a wet rock with some of the self-seekers or nuts or worse and climax a career most humans would envy with some hurtful trash.

Close as we have been, I've told you little or nothing about others who pretend to be expert. I always avoid this when there is the chance it can be public. But that doesn't mean that the overwhelming majority would not be ruinous as a source or in collaboration with Trumbo. I wrote a book about one when it appeared he would do greater harm than he had by then done. Only one person has ever seen it. Often I have thought of a book to purge. It is, tentatively, titled Lemming. I thought years ago and think now it could be commercial as hell. I hope I never feel I have to do it. I don't want to. But I am telling it to you the way it really is. You don't learn anything from those who sit and dream and hold court. And the amount of work required to know enough to have a dependable opinion on most aspects is much more than anyone with a busy life can or will do.

So, I'd also like to know what is known about this entire project.

Graves are for corpses, Art. If the few living who are doing anything- very few- have to endlessly shovel out the dirt that "friends" of the best intention heap into the hole on them, nothing gets done. Except, perhaps, that the workers get buried and the dreamers have nightmares they tell themselves are beautiful and real.

There is another coincidence on which I'm pledged to confidence and would have to observe it were I not. That announcement of this endeavor coincides with that, after nine years, is a remarkable coincidence, indeed.

Please let me know what you can as soon as you can.