

12/5/69

Dear Hal,

Many thanks for your letter of 12/2 and the helpful enclosure. It is now too late to make corrections in the Xerox edition, for that was Xeroxed yesterday, but it is not too late to make them in the master copy for any printing of any kind or for any further Xeroxing. Unfortunately, there is so enormous a pile of work here we have to "publish" the rough draft. Lil merely retypes it after we read it, making minimal corrections. Which is an excellent mechanism for maximizing error and minimizing quality. We've discussed this in the past. When she typed it we made this copy to send you, Paul, Jim and Gary. Paul's corrections were fewer than yours but quite helpful. I just did get them posted. I'm making a file for corrections, and I'll have this in it. When I get Jim's and Gary's I'll go over the master again, picking them all up at once. We had caught most of the typos Paul found, but there were some we didn't and some careless errors he caught that we didn't, as with "wrong year, etc."

I tumbled through yours. Your question is correct about brounens. No G. It seems, from recollection, you gave more we missed, though they all seem to fuse after going over 300 pages of it. We did renumber the pages. That, in itself, was quite a job. Part of it was an error by Lil, part was an addition in the last minute by me. I also anticipate notes to be appended, and an appendix. This, you see (as with your point about Andrews), is part II of the book you read a long time ago.

Paul is, I think, going to make copies. I've restricted it, for I do not want any of it out for a number of reasons, including using it as I want and when I want (including Bud, who is acting as my lawyer in a suit over it) and the possibility, no matter how remote, of selling it or parts of it. Therefore, as I asked Paul, I want the three of you not to disclose its contents to others. Of course, should you speak to DeKker, you'd have to tell him something. So, if you want a copy, it is okay. Merely arrange it with Paul. Lil is right now collating it and if she gets that done before the F.D. closes, I'll send him a copy this p.m. Unfortunately, I also want a few copies, so he may not do the copying right away. I cannot now pay for any. We have an incredibly good suit vs the govt on this, and I especially do not want them alerted. We'll be filing the suit as soon as we close a few possible legal loopholes. We will separate this from the JFK suit. So, while I would welcome any discussions you, Jim and Paul would have, for they would be constructive and helpful, I also do not want any of you passing on any of it or the fact of its existence. Besides, there are too many out there we have too much good reason not to trust, whether or not you realize it.

Pedro/Peter, etc: agreed. My belief is this was part of the frame.

Thanks for the kind comments. Preceding sentence: again, please say nothing, for in a month I've had no response to my request for a copy of the original and envelope, both of which the govt has. There is nothing to be gained but idle chatter on such things and there is the possibility of the opposite.

I know nothing of Knight or have forgotten it.

One of the advantages/problems of seeking the advice of others is that sometimes they contradict. As with you and Paul on "Lil". Or was it Paul? Somebody is sending me Dawney in a sentence but I've not gotten it yet. Maybe he forgot. I forgot who said he would, anyway....Your title suggestions also are good. But now that will wait until I have all comments....Does "More than a Whiff of Conspiracy" ever both possibilities, in your opinion?

I'm more weary than usual so I won't respond as much as I would. If I get to mail this today, I may not have time to write Paul, so I'd appreciate it if you'd ask him by phone, if he can, to hold off making any copies until I have a chance to see if I can get any money to pay for some for me. It would be too burdensome on him to ask him to duplicate that work. Also, perhaps Barnabei would want a copy, and I am satisfied for him to have it. He has helped very much, in areas where I needed help. And there may be others where I'd be satisfied.

In a mailing to Paul that is ready is a list of names. When you see him you might see if any of them mean anything to you.

Again, thanks.

Sincerely,

December 2, 1969

Dear Hal,

Paul was just here a few minutes ago and I turned over to him the enclosed memoranda of corrections I noted in the COUP chapters on the James Earl Ray/King affair. I read the ms this past week and now Paul is taking it over to Jim Schmitt for his study.

A word or two about the enclosed corrections of COUP. They are chiefly comments on type errors but occasionally I may add some comment about adding to a sentence to give it more meaning for your readers. In several instances, the carbon copy I studied was so poor I couldn't make out what was typed. Like Paul I would presume that when you went over something the original copy would have the corrected version. In cases where I doubted this to be the case I would make a notation. Wherever you see a line through a word or words such as: ~~there~~ - this indicates that it should be eliminated completely for either a mistake has been made in repeating a word or you had slipped up in your typing.

Paul gave me the memo on the letter by a "Pedro Charles" dated from Havana which I shall turn over to Bernarde as you advised. My first impressions were to doubt the letter completely but even if the sender was a real person it looks as if it is just one more chestnut tossed in to the fire to frame Oswald, either through a CIA-inspired effort or a Cuban exile deed. As Paul pointed out, it does seem unusual that "Pedro" would sign his name as "Peter" rarely used by Latins even when friendly. I'll ask Bernarde if this is the case. The fact that the Secret Service nor the FBI seems to have made much of this letter may have significance, of course, but here we'd be speculating.

I'm just now going through reading the "Garrison Case" by Milton E. Brener. One little thing I noted that jolted me was the mention on page 196 of one Howard Rice Knight from California. It says that he was called down to New Orleans for 4 days all expenses paid. I could have saved the N.O. office money in this instance. I interviewed him (if you're interested I can check through my notes), thought so little of what he had to say and promptly forgot about it. This had to be before he went down to N.O. for at that time he had not talked with Garrison. Who persuaded the staff to have him down, I don't know but if I had been contacted about him I would have told them to better spend the money elsewhere. This character claimed Ruby gave him money and tried to tie in himself with events leading to the assassination, unwittingly, that is.

Well, I do want to get this in to the mail tonight. Oh, and about the Oswald in N.O. ms: Sorry, but I've been so pressed for time lately I didn't get around to sending it to you. I'll send it very, very soon.

Regards to you and your wife, in the meantime.

Best,
Hal Verb
Hal Verb

P.S. - Some further comments on COUP I meant to mention but forgot to until now.

I think your work brilliant and that it definitely establishes that considerations of a conspiracy were, in effect, ruled out. Certainly Foreman's role was in no sense of the word that of a "defender" as the law would require. His ethics in handling the case should interest the more socially conscious and ~~more~~ aware lawyers around. As a matter of fact this part of COUP would probably do very well at Law school bookstores.

I was not at all surprised at the reaction of black leaders to your work. In fact, I would have predicted it.

Huie's uncritical acceptance of parts of Ray's alleged escapades could have been gone into more but I'm not pressing you on this. By the way, have you seen the latest "Penthouse" article by Peter Dawson?

I think your best chapters are 13 & 14, particularly 13. I'd like to see them appear in quality magazines by themselves with, of course, all rights to it being protected and no one using it for their own.

I thought you might be able to retitle certain chapters. For example, Chapter one could be retitled, "Next to Cotton...James Earl Ray." (From a quotation you cited in the chapter). Another chapter I'd retitle would be chapter 17. I think it should be retitled as, "...More Than a Whiff of Conspiracy" (this is from a quotation of TIME which you cite on page 459).

Good luck, anyway!

Hal
Hal