

Dear Jim

10/14/73

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As I think I've told you, I've been a little uneasy about Peter Dale Scott, and not only because he persists in staying in contact with those he now admits are nuts and claimed he appeared with them to begin with only because that was utilitarian. One of the things that sticks in my mind is his "proof" of the one thing I asked of him. By its nature, assuming it is true, it has the evidentiary value of Haldeman's and Ehrlichman's "interpretations" and it is an interpretation, not fact, an interpretation not warranted by the fact. We are both used to this kind of thing, but it is an acute disappointment for me to find it in him.

Sp, when I worked last night to the point where Lil can type for a while if and when she has time, and despite my needs for tomorrow, I started to read the "amparts piece you send in which he links the WG and JFK assassination. I read until my eyes hurt, making a few marks for later reference--not all I'd want for a real analysis. I'll continue reading now and these notes will be as I read, after I take a quick look at what I read last night.

= First let me say and at the same time confess something. I take a dim view of those who profess scholarship with copious footnotes and really use the work of others without crediting it. This is such a case. He uses my work in several places, and I can recognize it easily. Not his "interpretation", however, as when he has Oswald using an address of an organization that had not, itself, been at that address for a year. Again on Oswald's discharge, where only some of the inferences are warranted. Ditto for Santa Ana work. But when I find one of my few errors run in as though it is from another cited source, I find it hard to believe that this unusual error is accidental. (Bringuier) He also used something I told him and asked him not to use and this without citation. My reason for asking him not to use it is not because what he used is so important to me. It is because I want to be able to carry that inquiry farther and haven't only because I'm too broke to pay for the records or even the time to go over them where they are stored. As he used it it means little. But if it does not lead to the destruction of records, we'll be fortunate! It is not Warren material.

The last thing I read made me gag. Page 17 1st full graf col. 2, where he has so many of the commission staff and FBI such diligent seekers of truth ("many if not most")

When I see at the outset (first column, end first graf, reference to, as authority, "the eyes of some assassination buffs", a source often cited, I begin with serious doubts. This means only the nuts. And there and thereafter Fiorini is enormously overblown. When a man of his savvy does this, I have to wonder.

p. 13 begins with a greatly exaggerated puff for the Ervin committee, whose chief function as I see it has been not to learn. If you would see what I've delayed writing to do this you'd see how gross their suppression has been, worse than I've taken you time to send you. Can he not see this?

I didn't gag, I got bug-eyed when here I read that a "new approach" is needed (JFK), "to focus on the cover-up." It is not merely personal resentment, when all of my work has "focused" this way, that alerts me on seeing this. Most of the responsible work has been along this line. Only the nuts have departed from it. Maybe this means he is one of them, but I think it is not the only interpretation possible. How he leads in this "new" focus can indicate, and as far as I've gone it is a new false direction, but more cleverly pointed out. Here I find other formulations provocative because of his earlier work, which says he is not a careless writer, and in a mag piece he does not handle the enormity of material that goes into a book: "Although many vital records of the Watergate break-in were successfully destroyed..." Of the break-in itself I know of no "vital records" that were destroyed. Liddy's were, but they were of other than the break-in. McCord kept his around for more than a month. Aside from the fact that the break-in is the least important part of the affair (which can mean only that he doesn't understand enough) this is a cover for the suppressing of non-destroyed records, of which I have enough cases and will later this morning be writing of one set.

Col 2, he says the FBI's Dallas investigation had to be "justified" and all the spy gook did it. false. The FBI could move in to help the local police on an ad hoc basis, does it all the time, and what follows on no authorization is also false: Johnson gave a special kind he has the power to give. It is at the end of WWII and he has to know better.

I don't have time to check his apparent source for saying that JFK gave approval for a revanchist raid on that Soviet tanker, but if HR has, I'd appreciate it. (Carbon of this to him only.) It is NYTimes 4/2/63, pp. 1,9. If this is the case of the Rex, then it is also the case in which he misinformed me, saying that Nixon was counsel to the accused. What he does here is like Hunt's cables.

Bottom of the column (3rd), "Oswald's contact with the DRE in New Orleans..." There was no DRE there, only one man, Bringuier, and "contact" is a greatly-exaggerated way of saying that for his own reasons Oswald used that nut. (And Bringuier did not "head" Cuban-Americans for Nixon-Agnew.)

By this time, when I come to (15, col 1), citation of "an authoritative source" to prove that Hunt planned an assassination of Castro in 1966, I wonder if it is "Ae, Freed or Tackwood. Hunt was then still in CIA and I don't for a minute think he would have jeopardized his \$20,000 yearly retirement and other benefits to moonlight. The bottom of this column, on Artime and the defense fund, is garbage. "No revanchist Cuban needed any reason to organize a WG defense fund. But what can be said of the fund he doesn't, that it could be a cover for CIA payments.

Col. 2, just above the italics: there was no need for this justification. What LBJ says later is not relevant to what he was justifying. The idea came from a friend of mine, it preceded this date, Abe Fortas took it up with LBJ, and there were other needs, the immediate ones, aside from federal control, being to block the Texas investigation that was inevitable, or not required by law.

The last of this column is false and if he knows any of the material, it can't be accidental falsehood. He knows enough about my work to use it, and if he doesn't know it from there he knows it from Hoover's testimony, if he has read it. The one sure ground in the FBI "investigation" was legal authorization. He can't even know Hoover and write this way-honestly.

Col 3. I'll not check the citation, but I'm certain there is no dependable testimony, if any, that Oswald had a government voucher for \$200 at the time of his arrest(5H242)".

16: Col 3, last full graf. "Here he corrupts the testimony and my use of it and non-Warren material. That "group" did not have a "secret clearance" as "a minimum requirement." Only five men had secret. Confidential was minimum. And regardless of what he may be citing, the "basic function" was not training other men.

There is more, but I think this is enough to where I stopped reading.

The "Ruby stuff" is so overblown that, when combined with his special interpretation about the police Special Service Bureau it can be a cover for the truth.

Suddenly we have "Ruby's status as a high-level police informant." No proof, not likely. He was so broke none of these things seems possible.

This entire page is over-written. Some of the suspicions may be warranted, but the whole thing is based on special interpretations that may or may not be justified. The space on tenuous evidence is in itself an exaggeration of importance, hidden by the cop-out may it all was "innocent." The end of the last column you will recognize as what I've been trying to replace, my copy having disappeared, Diorini as gambling czar. I discussed this with him. Note he cites no authority. BUT, if he finds this valid, then why not connect with McLaney and thus the JFK deal? I see he does below, with a gross misuse of Bringuier's perjury and an enormous exaggerate, that jazz about "infiltrating" one man and a camp that was a non-secret joke. (there were four camps, by the way.)

I find the indefiniteness with which he refers to Mafia narcotics interest in China interesting, bottom col. 1. Far, far in past but most readers will not take it this way. If the Mafia provided all this "against the threat of Communist take-over," why did the U.S. have to do so much? The Cuban involvement in narcotics may well be greater than he here says. It is not new and they have become major in it, at least east coast.

1st full graf col 2 over-written and thus exaggerated. He can't even recognize a real cover when he faces one.

How many different people "headed up Cubans for Nixon", not its name? Not the former Mayor of Havana, here. but Batista's former UN Ambassador, Portuondo. He makes this kind of mistake so often I wonder how much of his stuff is what he remembers of what Mae read him over the phone.

Penultimate graf: I see he has cut his misrepresentation down to size, has Nixon not as Hohly's lawyer but as having made a humanitarian gesture, my version to him. Passing comment: Turner is not the source, which was a rightOwing outfit in D.C.

He even assumes what Ervin will go into, assuming what is outside its authorization. He does it in a clever way, suggesting that it will and when they do it will substantiate him.

What brought death to Rorke is not what he here suggests. Rorke disappeared. His former associates, who detested him, believe his plane crashed in Guatemala.

This whole thing seems to pivot around what is without evidentiary substantiation, Fiorini as a key figure in everything beginning with intelligence operations.

This kind of writing does us no good. It mixes error, interpretations that are not validated by the citations (assuming they are faithful), conjecture not indetified as conjecture, inferences of many kinds that again seem reasonable as presented but if followed have no real founding, with what is factual and out of context. It is a well-done job, but is it a weel-done article? Does it tell us anything? "as he given even a reasonable gound of serious investigation?"

I think he has launched a major new diversion and at a crucial time, because there is a basis for thinking Dallas and WG are in some way related. This way of doing it can, it seems to me, be no better than a way of killing it. By the time what he should know will happen does happen, the FBI and the CIA and others get finished taking it apart and itemizing its errors--and they won't have to lie or exaggerate - he will have killed all possible serious interest by those who might have the interest. This is the kind of thing that was deadly with the Kennedys and on the Hill generally. The Warren files show this. They ever printed some, not always faithfully.

This does not address motive and prupose. I can't, responsibly. He could be a true believer, only under-informed and over-persuaded that he alone had the unique genius required for true understanding.

If such a person always manages to surface at the time this kind of need is to be served, that is not to say that nay of these is an agent. The trees are loaded with nuts. They drop all the time.

All I can responsibly say is that this is not responsible writing. In places it is not honest (by my old-fashioned standards, not those of academe today, perhaps). The rest may be coincidence. But regardless of motivation, this can serve only one purpose, and that is what interests me. Because I could build a different case, and I don't take the time (as with what he left out about Oswald and Spas Raisky that is factual, preferring his own conjectures), my own feelings are stronger than the proof justifies.

Here I must confess prejudices, perhaps stronger because of the shock when I found how different he is in person than I'd gathered from The War Conspiracy, which I now must view in a different light, when I can, if I do take the time. And a different, more personal prejudice. As a general thing, if I hear of anyone who claims to be engaged in real investigation about the JFK assassination and he goes to the CTIA crowd and avoids me, I have doubts. I have done most of the responsible writing. Certainly three times at least as much as anyone else has been published. I don't think it is personal to wonder why a serious scholar whuld shun the source of most writing, even by mail, go to within 50 miles of him and then not call him, and when he finally is persuaded by another to make a visit, attempts to prosyltize instead of asking questions. Especially a scholar new to the field when he has a chance to ask the senior one in the field and the only original one still in it.

He spent much time at the Archives when he was in this area. The article reflects that his self-conceived unique intellect extracted nothing from that work and time. There is nothing in it he couldn't have gotten from what to him were local files, Hoch's.

I also wonder how a new man to the field could have avoided writing me for my books, which were not available elsewhere when he entered the field. This tells me what I take as a measure of the kind of interest he has. I know he could have borrowed them or found them in his library, but for serious work he'd want them at hand.

So I have doubts. My eye just caught what I'd missed, first page, graf 2: "E. Howard Hunt, the man chosen by Nixon's re-election team to mastermind the Watergate break-in..." And I'm reminded that he makes no reference to Hunt and Guatemala. HW 10/14/73