

8 March 1972

HW:

We are not returning the copy of the Esquire article on Ray which you sent, since you did not ask it. If you don't need it, we're glad to have it. If you do, please say so.

I'm not competent to comment on the substance of this article, never having spent enough time on the case itself in detail to get a truly clear idea of it.

My primary impression of this article is that its basic aim is to obfuscate, confuse and discourage anyone from getting very interested ~~in~~ pursuing it much further. Its strongest argument appears to focus attention on the ~~back~~ militants as the likeliest candidates for the honor or backing Ray, and its weakest appear to exonerate the FBI and CIA with flimsy evidence easily dismissed.

Circumstantially the timing cannot be ignored, considering Ray's latest alleged escape attempt and the denial by the appellate court. To extrapolate from this, the article could be an effort to create a climate in which things could be kept calm if Ray should be killed, which would revive interest in the case in general and could even revive interest in Frame-Up specifically.

The fact that F-U, yourself, Fensterwald and others who currently are trying to do something about Ray appears impossible to ignore in this light. Equally interesting is the way Foreman's role is merely recounted as simply as possible, with no real attempt to explain it. The stand taken that Stoner remains the only attorney in the case is not, in my opinion, in any sense an accident.

The opening of the article certainly suggests strongly that the writer or writers have read F-U and set out to set up the same ~~arguments and premises~~ premises and then demolish them. Some, at least, of the errors you discern could be deliberate to prevent proof of plagiarism, particularly since the book, its author and whole point of view is thereafter ignored.

Although the writing is low key and unsensational, it nevertheless comes out smooth and convincing. Possibly a happy accident, but equally possibly a highly professional job.

As to why Esquire might have been chosen as the vehicle, about all one can say is that the target could have been a more literate and perhaps wealthier audience than could have been reached, say, in True or Saga or Argosy. Because it's more expensive, Esquire is kept around longer in the waiting ~~room~~ room at the dentist's, and any subliminal effect intended could be that much longer lasting. At one time Esquire published a great deal of stuff on the JFK assassination, some of it highly effective in much the same way. I feel rather strongly this is not a pot boiler.

jdw