

(Memo Bill O'Connell)

31 March 1969

Dear Bill,

It was grand to talk to you on Friday night and to hear the latest news about the Loyal Order of the Mardi Gras and Feeble Apologia. The second reel of tape arrived Saturday but before I could even finish auditing the preceding one, I was tapped into meeting Harold Weisberg at Penn Station --he was between trains, en route to Frederick. He had written in advance, to outline his itinerary and suggest this rendezvous, which I had every intention of avoiding. But I was the victim of my own inability to allow the phone to ring without picking it up.

Harold's attitude toward Garrison is both ambivalent and ambiguous. He concurs in many of the charges--that the prosecution was inept, that Garrison made colossal errors (though he still credits him with moments of "genius"), that he and his staff violate promises and cannot be trusted, etc. But HW insists that Shaw is Bertrand, and CIA as well; that the trial will ultimately prove to be important, in "building a record," and so forth. With his own unique genius, he somehow manages to disassociate himself from Garrison and at the same time to support him, to a degree, while also at the same time insisting that he himself has made tremendous discoveries in New Orleans while the DA's office turned up nothing on its own.

Incidentally, HW disparages Newcomb as a coward and erratic in his reliability as a researcher. He already knew about the business of Ray Marcus and the Z film but insists that Newcomb's wife asked Ray to take custody of the film, for Newcomb's own good (whatever that may mean), and seems to support Ray's refusal to return it.

Though I managed to limit our rendezvous to a bit over an hour, I parted from HW with my head spinning with a stream of names dates and sensational discoveries he had made in New Orleans, all or most of which he had cautioned me to keep confidential---unnecessarily, since I retained practically nothing of what he told me, which seemed to me mostly irrelevant anyhow. But I did not get away that easily: just before boarding his train, HW handed me the ms. for his umpteenth (unpublished) book. I literally struggled through about half of it over the weekend. It is devoted almost exclusively to the 1968 panel report on the autopsy photos and X-rays, a subject which does interest me intensely, and it is a measure of his self-defeating writing style that his verbiage all but killed my interest. Mind you, his attack on the panel's report is unrelenting and devastating. Not a speck or a crumb escapes his scathing and generally valid analysis. But he has the disease of total inclusivity, which can be wearisome beyond endurance, and his rhetoric does not improve with familiarity, nor his incessant self-advertisement through constant references to WHITEWASH and subsequent works. What a pity it is, because the same material, rationally organized and edited severely, and pruned of the thunderous heavy-handed sarcasm, would constitute a much-needed expose of the shameful panel report.

Before dealing with HW's ms., I did listen to the whole of the two tapes, for which I am very grateful. Kevin, despite his gullibility even now, at least took an outspoken position on the ludicrous "case" against Shaw and expressed almost total disillusion with Garrison, refusing to accept Kunkin's flimsy and laughable alibis. For Kunkin himself, words threaten to fail me. His stupidity is phenomenal, and his intellectual equipment so impoverished that he is simply too insignificant to notice. Am I correct in thinking that Kevin was pro-Garrison until the trial? If so, he is among the very, very few who was honest enough to acknowledge the disaster and to eschew dishonest alibis for the Hero, both in this broadcast and in the San Diego newsletter. I am inclined to attribute his lingering silliness on the "mysterious deaths" to ignorance. What I really did

verdict. That was, of course, in mid-trial. No sooner was the verdict in than Lane wrote to the N.Orls. Times-Picayune voicing the view, I am told, that time would show that the jury was mistaken (I haven't seen the letter, as I get the States-Item).

It seems that some rats insist on sinking with the ship---maybe because they are afraid that a plunge into the water would wash the dirt off them and show them for the deformed and sorry little creatures they are.

I am not really depressed, Bill, at least not more so than warranted by the rather depressing circumstances in which we find ourselves through no fault of our own. But I do appreciate David's thought. With warm affection and thanks,

Yours as ever,