

31 October 1967

Mr. Penn Jones, Jr.  
Box 70  
Midlothian, Texas 76065

Dear Penn,

I should like to disabuse you of the notion that I wrote, or influenced Arnoni to write, the editorial on Garrison. In the first place, I do not publish my views behind a protective shield of anonymity. I have said what I have to say, both on the Warren Report and on Garrison, in my own writing, and I stand behind what I have written---in the case of Garrison, on pages 456-457 of my book, written in June 1967 for insertion in the epilogue.


In the second place, you and others who have attributed the editorial to me or to my alleged "influence" overlook or misjudge Arnoni's aggressive and uncompromising resistance to influence or instruction from any source, including those in a position to alleviate the magazine's precarious financial position.

I could not influence Arnoni's view of Garrison earlier this year, when we held differing positions on the district attorney; I did not influence Arnoni's change of position, which was purely and simply a logical response to Garrison's elaboration of his "case;" and I did not influence the substance or the style of the editorial. Had I written it, it would probably have been less charitable and more rude.

I hope and assume that you did not intend to question my integrity in suggesting, as you did, that I was directly or indirectly projecting my views in anonymity, or questioning Arnoni's, in suggesting that he had surrendered his independence of judgment. Nevertheless, I am regretful that you drew inferences from the editorial that are entirely unwarranted. I regret also that the letter-writers who lost no time in scolding Arnoni (and/or paying undeserved tributes to my "influence") continue to maintain silence, if they do not actually condone, demonstrable and blatant lack of scruples on the part of their ally, the district attorney. One or two letter-writers even concede that Garrison's methods are sometimes unfortunate, that his case has troublesome aspects, and that some of his witnesses and evidence "seemingly" are questionable. In a strange manifestation of fairness, they then proceed to reproach Garrison's critics for saying, in print, much the same thing.

You will forgive me, I hope, if I see in this manifestation something of a parallel with, for example, Alexander Bickel's sneers and vituperation against the critics of the Warren Report, which he himself had to admit was shamefully defective.

Yours sincerely,

  
Sylvia Meagher  
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