

(Copy)

Irving, Texas
April 20, 1968

Dear Jim Garrison:

I was much moved by the two days just spent in New Orleans. I had had no personal knowledge of you and only the most fragmentary and inaccurate information on the nature of your investigation of conspiracy. I was glad to discover that there are some fundamental ways in which I agree with the importance of your pursuit of information regarding a possible conspiracy. Most basic is the conviction that if our form of society is to survive we must create checks and balances on the burgeoning clandestine wing of our government called the CIA. (Or close it down.) Your charges are so sweeping and major that it would be national folly not to pursue the issue to see where truth lies. There can be no harm in such pursuit, it seems to me, unless innocent people suffer markedly as a result of it. The harm in our not pursuing truth regarding the questions you raise could be great indeed.

I was impressed, as anyone must be, by the sheer force of your personality. It would seem in the nature of things that people who agree with you would gather to you, and those who disagree would simply turn away. It has occurred to me that if I can be helpful to your search it is as a person who might raise doubts about your conclusions and data from a position basically sympathetic to your objectives. You don't have many "middle-ground" people around you and are not likely to have. It is possible that this sort of "check and balance" on the probe itself would not be of interest to you, but my guess is that it would be.

If there are ways I can help I shall be glad. I was struck by your passionate concern for Man, and by the intense grief you feel over the loss of President Kennedy. I, too, feel that loss acutely. He was a most remarkable person, and extremely valuable to our country. Besides his charm and brilliance as a man he also was a president innoculated by the experience of the Bay of Pigs. He had taken the measure of the "expert advice" of generals (and the CIA) and had found it wanting. He was a man prepared to do his own thinking in a framework of the highest regard for man, for life and for civilization. For myself, I have given up wondering when the sharp sting of my grief over his loss will wane. I have concluded it never shall, and in that I found you kindred.

With highest regards,

(Ruth)

Mrs. Michael R. Paine