

25 May 1968

Mr. Kerry Thornley  
726 South 51st Street  
Tampa, Florida 33619

Dear Mr. Thornley,

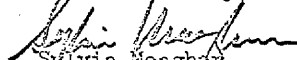
Thank you for your letter of 22 May 1968. At the outset, I have to tell you that there is no possibility of my organizing or participating in any formal committee or organization to seek public support on behalf of your legal defense against perjury charges by the New Orleans prosecutor. The reasons for my stand are numerous and perhaps too lengthy to detail here. Let me hasten to add, however, that I intend to do everything possible, acting independently and as an individual, to avert a miscarriage of justice and to expose the machinations and the misuse of power which has placed you in your present predicament.

As I understand the facts, you were unable to identify John Rene Heindel as the Marine with whom Lee Harvey Oswald conversed in Russian during the time when you were both in service, thus frustrating a plan to charge Heindel with perjury and/or conspiracy if he denied such conversations with Oswald. Garrison, who had considered you a "friendly witness," then placed you under suspicion of clandestine association with Oswald during his residence in New Orleans in 1963 and charged, privately if not publicly, that you were an agent of the CIA. He produced before the New Orleans grand jury a woman who identified you--more than four years after the alleged "fact"--as the man she had seen together with Oswald in a New Orleans cafe in the summer or fall of 1963. This, you denied in sworn testimony before the grand jury. The grand jury did not hand down an indictment but the District Attorney, on the basis of the testimony of his witness, then issued a warrant for your arrest on a charge of perjury.

I am further informed that you do not have means to ensure a proper legal representation against charges which appear to result from outright harrassment and entrapment, on wholly false grounds, by an unscrupulous and vindictive prosecutor who is pressing an uninformed, irresponsible, and often lunatic "investigation" into the Kennedy assassination which threatens to cast into utter disrepute all challenges to the Warren Report, including those which are legitimate, impartial, and scholarly.

Such flagrant abuse of trust and such ruthless action against innocent bystandars can only arouse disgust and indignation--the more so when committed in the name of truth and justice, and abetted by certain of the critics of the Warren Report who supposedly were wholly committed to high principles and the strictest ethical standards. I am enclosing herewith my check for one hundred dollars to assist you in meeting legal costs in defending yourself against specious and malicious charges which amount to outright frame-up. I am also sending copies of this letter to a number of persons, including reporters and editors, in the hope that they will be willing to call public attention to your plight and to assist you with funds to meet the costs of your defense. You may feel sure that I will use every opportunity which presents itself to make the facts known and to enlist support.

Yours sincerely,

  
Sylvia Meagher  
302 West 12 Street  
New York, N.Y. 10014

cc: M.S. Arnoni, Leo Sauvage, Edward Jay Epstein,  
James Phelan, Richard Billings, Eric Norden,  
Philippe Labro, Mel Dilber, David Lifton,  
William O'Connell, Joseph Masi, Fred Cook,  
J.D. Thompson, Ted Kupferman, Thomas Stamm, et al