

Route 1, Box 275
Yellow Springs, Ohio 45387
August 19, 1968

Sylvia Meagher
302 W. 12th St.
New York City

Dear Mrs. Meagher:

The visit we had over the phone last week was very helpful. I have been thinking about it and would like to discuss further some of the subjects we talked over.

I feel that we are involved in a rather fundamental ethical problem in Garrison's work that needs more careful consideration that traditional ethics has given us the tools to consider. And I feel the time has come when we need to go beyond that traditional ethics.

The traditional ethics tended to apply the same standards to all people, and to conceive that doing otherwise was compromise. The alternative is to conceive that different people, different grades of people and different cultures each have ethical standards that are distinctive to them, and we need to learn to live both with ethical rigor and amidst ethical variety. This is rather obviously true of for example those of us who hold to the standard of non-violence. We have ourselves barely learned what is necessary to make it work, and if the few of us who believe in it have so hard a time putting it to practice, we cannot ask others who have not come to believe in it to live by our ethical standards. Yet I would make a strong and hard distinction between differences of standards and differences of purpose. Those who fight for personal power, for tyranny and property as against human rights are in the opposing camp, whatever their ethical procedures. I would seek to have good will toward them, but not to have any confusion of my purpose with theirs.

In regard to the assassination studies and work I feel that there is a great deal of underlying unity of purpose among Sauvage Weisberg, Salandria, Joesten, Lane, Jones and yourself -- and some others. Clearly Epstein is now in the other camp. My impression is that among the group there has been an unnecessary degree of the usual personal animosity at human failings of all of us that has done a good deal to impair the work to which we are all committed. I would not want teamwork, unity and mutual aid to carry over into the old political order of supporting each other whether right or wrong out of personal loyalty as contrasted with the the dominant control of purpose and principle. But I feel it is well to recognize the importance of unity in those purposes and the teamwork that must follow. You have done this in your selflessly contributing to Epstein's scholarship and that of others.

I have the feeling that Jim Garrison, with all his faults is not only deeply committed to the same common purpose, but also that he continues to have a role and a part of the teamwork, and that it may be right of Vince, Hal, Penn and Mark Lane to work with him, although you may also be entirely right in maintaining your independence and freedom from involvement in this New Orleans endeavor. Your objectivity is greatly needed. I feel that it might be yet more objective, that our distress at poor ethical and legal standards having been followed should not keep us from seeing the excellent qualities that are still there and the potential they may yet serve by virtue of selfless united endeavor. This recognition, in association with honest and candid appraisal of the realities as we know them, may be one of the most needed ingredients of the job we now have to do.

I am fortunate in that I have not gotten published all (most) I have written for publication. Some, perhaps most of it, was good. But I pulled some big boners at times. I accepted Weisberg's idea that the presidential limousine was at the fourth road strip at the time of the Altgens photograph and was ready to upset the whole Warren Report by its implications presented to the scientific world. Only late in the job did I work out by photographic evidence just where the presidential limousine was and independently located it at the fifth road strip. I'm ashamed at the amount of my own and of others attention and time I devoted to this false lead. I made a big mistake. I can appreciate Jim's mistakes after making my own. If we will honestly admit them we may still go on and do useful work.

This is the general feel of how I would qualify what I said to you. I am ignorant enough that I don't know if you or Vince is fundamentally right about Jim. That is less important than an expression of what I feel should be the basic rules of procedure for us.

I will inclose a copy of each of two things I had published in a small way.

If you should have conveniently available for duplication the clipping on the Miami tape from the Miami News, I'd greatly appreciate receiving a copy of it. Bill Barry has not answered my letter.

Incidentally, I felt particularly good the review of your book in the Minority of One, and have been interested in the curious phenomenon of Alexander Bickel.

With best wishes,

fraternally

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