

22 June 1969

Dear Dick,

I think I owe you one or two replies to your recent letters. After correspondence and conversations with Tink Thompson I feel that he did not engage in deliberate falsification but neither did he cover himself with glory in this whole episode. His initial reply or replies to you were extremely weak as to facts and took the really inexcusable attitude that he was not obliged to defend his work. What made that even worse was that not very long ago Tink and I were shredding another "expert" involved in this business (briefly and peripherally) for the same contemptible pose of being "above" any need to defend his "research."

Be that as it may, I do accept his word that he did not purposefully misrepresent the condition of the cartridge case at issue. But this still leaves the equally disquieting fact that he cited only Day's 4H testimony and said nothing about Day's later versions of the facts, in the 7H affidavits --he first said that he should have included a footnote indicating the change in Day's testimony, and later he suggested that at the time he did his book he might not have been aware of the later affidavits. So I can choose between poor scholarship or a presentation which is tantamount to a misrepresentation.

I am not happy with either conclusion but I did part with Tink on friendly terms when he left last Sunday for a year in Denmark. Tink is young, ambitious, and he was very anxious to "crack" this case. (I have often wondered why it attracted so many philosophers--Popkin and the "ex-critic" turned apologist, Curtis Crawford, as well as Thompson.) I think he may have some serious weaknesses of character and judgment, but I am absolutely sure that he is not an "agent" of any kind or degree. Probably I know Tink better than any of our colleagues know him, which is absolutely no guarantee of anything (as I have been spectacularly wrong about people, before and during this case), but for what it is worth, that is my conviction about him.

The other day I received a wedding announcement from Dick Sprague. I hope that he will be happy in his new marriage, which seems to have followed a very difficult and troubled time in his personal life, from which he took refuge to some extent in his work on the WR. I see that Garrison is back in the news in New Orleans--under attack for inaction on organized crime, and now his chief assistant Charles Ward has quit to run against Garrison for the office of DA, trailing clouds of bribery charges in his wake and accusing Garrison of being soft on the SDS (though he is prosecuting five non-white students for "flag desecration"). Jolly good show, as they say. Never has the case been as dead as during these last months. Unless something really monumental comes to light, I am afraid that it will stay this way. All the best,