

25 November 1969

Dear Tom,

I had just finished reading Brener's book on Garrison the day before I got your letter. Like you, I was agreeably surprised by the generally high quality of the book and by Brener's dispassionate, or at least, temperate tone. I was also struck by the identicality of Garrison's and Agnew's attack on the press and the Eastern HQs, etc. Two demagogues with but a single line.

One weakness of Brener's book, I thought, was that he seemed to peter out when he had covered all the ground leading up to the Shaw trial, and gave the trial itself rather skimpy treatment. Perhaps he has in mind a second book, on the trial per se...or maybe he just did get weary of the whole thing, having made his point quite convincingly.

The Salandrias and the Sahls will probably say all the same things about the Agnew speech that you and I would say. They have never felt under an obligation to be logical or consistent. They will just say that NBC was not monolithic enough to suit the neo-Neanderthals now in power, or that the conspiracy was directed toward the Warren Report and a few other specific issues. What they will not say, under any circumstances, is that Agnew was a faithful echo of Garrison, and vice versa, nor will they draw the proper conclusions from that. Some day, they may finally realize that it is not enough to be visceral, and that some intellectual integrity is indispensable if one is to luxuriate in moral outrage.

One could only be appalled by the Agnew demogoguery, and chilled. To say nothing of Mr. Mitchell and his preposterous wife, who taken literally are better than any caricature or cartoon that could possibly be devised. To say nothing of Songmy...and the Green Berets...and all the other works of the Pentagon. The picture would be totally bleak, were it not for the inspiring young people who held the March Against Death, for the Goodells and the McGovern...

I have sent for Curry's book, more to keep my collection complete than from anticipation of anything really meaningful in his "assassination file."

Yes, Epstein will no doubt rake in the dollars on his fortuitously topical study of decision-making in TV. The best rebuttal of Agnew, by the way, came in my opinion from Bill Moyers, who pointed out that he was not really worried about anything except disaffection with Nixon's speech and his Vietnam policy in general, for Agnew after all had nothing to say about the monopolistic press in terms of the war-loving Chicago Tribune and NY Daily News, which have the same ownership, or the many other single-ownership newspapers in particular cities which get nothing from their papers except the John Birch/Minuteman line. It is only the "intellectuals" (liberals and others to the left of H. L. Hunt) that stir the Agnewian beast into unaccustomed imitation of human speech.

Must start my day's work now. Best affection,