

3 July 1969

Dear Tom, (Bethell)

Your envelope with the additional pages of the diary and your letter of the 30th arrived last night and I did a "first reading," with particular interest in the account of Epstein's visit and the other events of the period covered in these pages. I put them together with the previous sections of the diary, in chronological order, and the only gap appears to be the time you spent at the Archives. When that is ready, the entire diary should be re-paginated and then, if you like, I will prepare an index to it.

I had been quite impressed with the analytical manuscript that you had started and that you took to Bob Ockene but in many ways I find the chronological, daily-log approach of even greater piquancy. That may be because I was, in a way, a part of the events recorded, even if only as a spectator. For the general public, the diary approach may have certain disadvantages; but it has the merit of forcing the reader to follow for himself the evolution of the whole affair and to share your experience day by day, and then to form his own judgments--about your own sincerity and logic, about Garrison's character and performance, and about the various other personalities involved. This is especially desirable for that segment of rabid Garrison-supporters who will try to dismiss you as well as Gurvich, Epstein, and others as sinister agents who set out with the express purpose of sabotaging the "investigation," and who might more easily brush off an analytical or polemical work. They will not be able easily to dismiss the cumulative impact of your experience and your growing uneasiness about Garrison's "case" and his methods. (Not that they will not try.)

So far as those people are concerned, the die-hards and fanatics, the ms. even in its present form does present one area of vulnerability--that is, that it tends to assume a pro-Warren Report posture and does not reflect adequately your own genuine scepticism and questioning of the WR. I am not at all suggesting that you should exaggerate any doubts you had or have about the WR: only that to the extent that you really have serious criticism and questions, they should be adequately reflected. In the first instance, you might elaborate on your feelings at the time you first began to question the official findings, and make more of a point of the connection between your serious doubts of the WR and your acceptance of a job with Garrison. Later on, in connection with authentic criticism of the WR that was published (by Thompson, myself and others) during the Garrison "probe" and also in relation to the "Dealey Plaza" part of the Shaw trial, you could again take the opportunity to reflect both your own position and the clear fact that there is legitimate ground for questioning or repudiating the WR, quite apart from the vaudeville in New Orleans.

I think this is important in order to minimize as much as possible any elements in the ms. that will present an excuse to those fanatics who will try to dismiss the whole thing as a mere inverted apologia for the WR and an Establishment-inspired or commissioned work.

I think also that you will need to write an analytical first chapter, setting the scene for the diary that will follow. If you like, I would be willing to try my hand at a short "introduction" more or less like Savage did for my book, or Revere for Epstein's. As I mentioned, Epstein's editor at Viking is now a hot-shot at Holt-Rinehart, and might be receptive to your ms.



Subject to a second more careful reading, my impression is that there is no serious discordance between the "genuine" diary and the reconstructed portions relying on newspapers, memory, etc. So far as I can remember, the diary does cover all or most of the anecdotes and incidents you reported contemporaneously, on the phone or during your visits, with perhaps such minor exceptions as your first visit to my apartment and the excitement of discovering the "Fairy" document in the Hearing and Exhibits (even though it turned out not to be relevant), and the business of the Waggoner Carr files and Garrison's half-jesting suggestion of entrapping me as "co-operating" via my examination of those materials. I have checked my notes of our telephone conversations without finding anything else that was omitted from the diary.

No, I do not hear from Turner or Hock, neither of whom were ever regular correspondents or close associates even in earlier times; but I do hear fairly often from David Lifton. He wrote me last week, incidentally, that Fensterwald had been in Los Angeles and had given him one of the best meals in a long time. I had had earlier reports from my spies of Fensterwald's stay in Dallas, with Mary F. and her two fellow-researchers (who apparently then visited Washington, judging from something Weisberg wrote me). I also had a picture postcard from Fensterwald saying that he was on this cross-country trip and would tell me about it when he got back (which he has not done, and which I am not really very interested in). What you say about his attitudes and connections (Hoffa, RFK, etc.) jibes with what I have heard from various others, and from Weisberg, who knows Fensterwald quite well.

So far as his apparent supply of funds, I have an idea that some of it at least comes from dear Joe Pomerance (whose name I encountered in your diary, in the parts just received) and who had once contacted me in an effort to start something rolling on the WR and Garrison on behalf of Gene McCarthy's campaign for the nomination. I think I sent you copies of my exchange of letters with her, rejecting her appeal to withhold public attacks on Garrison until he had his day in court, what cockamammy logic.

That book I mentioned when you called, in case you want to get hold of it, is "The Assassin Who Gave Up His Gun," by E.V. Cunningham. Another book, not connected at all with the case but which I recommend with all the vehemence at my command, is "The Joys of Yiddish," by Leo Rosten, which should be in the public library. I had almost forgotten how to laugh, for lack of the occasion in these last few years, but this marvelous book has had me in the grip of hilarity for two days, and laughing at the top of my lungs and even screaming with mirth so that the cat was frightened.

I have sent a subscription to the States-Item, for delivery in Boston, and will keep up with events while I am there. If anything stupendous happens, though, you know how to reach me. And I would appreciate a line if and when the LIFE article on organized crime comes out, so that I won't overlook it in the press of work in Boston. Do keep well, Tom, and stay in touch. All the best,