

2 June 1969

Dear Tom,

Don't worry, I am still most interested in your diary---in fact, the latest (last?) installment is particularly absorbing. It casts clear light on Garrison and the staff in general, and on the conduct of the "investigation" from the inside as compared to the coverage simultaneously in the news media. It also clears up for me a minor mystery, in identifying one Jim Rose. Only a few days ago I heard the name for the first time, as one of the many California pro-Garrison contingent, and was at a loss to place him. A Bill Turner protege, whose methods of operation must indeed have attracted Garrison (they rather repel me, need I say). The story of Turner's monied hippy-types also is rather fascinating. I suspect the money originated with Ramparts and Warren Hinckle, one of the most ruthless and obscene phonies ever to impersonate a "liberal." When he loses his cool, as he did once in a radio interview, he sounds just like a 1930 brownshirt, Berlin style.

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Hinckle squeezed half a million out of the then-editor of Ramparts, Edward Keating, then ~~through~~ him out and took over complete control, systematically degraded and bankrupted the magazine, despite enormous success in raising large sums of money --which he then proceeded to blow on luxury and ostentation, while refusing to pay salaries and fees for commissioned work. Since he put Garrison on the cover of the magazine, I suspect he financed the \$2000 cash gift to him. Also appreciated your remarks about Weisberg; would have liked to hear more about Gary Schoener, who started writing to me and wrote prolifically, late last year, but then petered out. (Never met him; I suspect Vince put him on to me, since I refused to resume any contacts with him personally, and that Schoener in his letters to me posed somewhat as an objective observer and neutral in re: Garrison, while in fact he is probably as infatuated as Vince himself.)

A brief comment on your statements at the bottom of page 40: whether you call it a "conspiracy" or not, the fact is that I have cited instance after instance of deliberate misrepresentation by the Warren Commission and/or the FBI, by commission or omission, with chapter and verse in each case. Each misrepresentation, whether gross or sophisticated, whether major evidence or trivial points were at issue, was designed to bolster an impossible hypothesis and to incriminate Oswald, or to conceal data in his favor. Whether you choose to call it conspiracy, or a much more subtle and implicit process in which each participant knew, without discussion or instruction, what was wanted, the fact remains that there was flagrant deceit at every stage of the affair and even as recently as early this year, in the form of the report of the 1968 panel on the autopsy photos and X-rays--an extremely dishonest and cunningly written document which only enlarges and intensifies the conflicts and discrepancies in the autopsy, medical, and ballistics findings. You must form your own judgment as to whether such sustained and determined liberties with fact are really reconcilable with valid "official conclusions" of Oswald's sole guilt. No more so, I believe, than Garrison's distortions and inventions were consistent with Shaw's guilt. The only difference is that one frame-up was more crude and blatant (especially as seen from the inside) than the other, and that one victim was alive, while the other was dead, executed under the most curious circumstances.

Incidentally, you are not the only one in New Orleans who is writing a book on this subject: Garrison, too, is at work, as perhaps you know already. I heard

this interesting news about a week ago from Ralph Schoenman, whom I met for the first time and who had just returned from an enchanted week with Garrison. RS, as you may remember, is the secretary (grey eminence) behind Lord Russell and was very closely tied up with Mark Lane in the early days, 1964-66. The Russell group or committee even invested \$20,000 in Lane's film (R to J), and are now suing him to recover their due share in the earnings, which Lane and de Antonio have refused to fork over.

Schoenman has been out of the case for some years, and (heaven help us!) relied upon Garrison for an account of his "investigation" and the Shaw trial. Naturally he left New Orleans intoxicated and enthusiastic, and with a highly fictionalized version of the trial. He knew nothing, for example, about Charles Speisel or Habinghorst or other mortifications to the prosecution, and was increasingly horrified as I filled him in. By the time we parted, I think his view of Garrison had shifted by about 180°--not alone because of the "evidence" as such, as I detailed it in order to correct the serious gaps in Garrison's briefing but (the coup de grace) because he was horrified to learn that Garrison is now prosecuting five SUNO demonstrators for flag-desecration. There ain't hardly nothing that could offend the Russell/War Crimes Tribunal more than that--and it offends me mightily, I might add.

I have never heard one good thing about Schoenman from anyone; but since he looked me up, I decided to push out of my mind all the denunciations of him that I had heard on all sides (including Bob Ockene) and accept him at face value. He was certainly very pleasant and very intelligent, disarming is the word, I think, but I found it strange that he was so anxious to get back into the case, to consult me and get my opinion and suggestions on the best approach to revive public sentiment and pressure to reopen the case, yet he had not really read my book--which was on his bookshelf. He said that he had started to read it but had been interrupted by travels and other work. Still, I think that anyone really interested in the evidence would wish to read the critics' books; whereas anyone interested in public relations and personal publicity might be more concerned with the author than the book.

Almost forgot one of the strangest parts of my long discussion with Schoenman. As we were discussing Garrison and I was using my usual epithets for him (obscene charlatan, cretin, windbag, demagogue, etc., etc.) Schoenman seemed to become more and more bewildered. Finally, he asked how in the world I could talk about Garrison in such terms when Garrison had praised me to the skies, had said that I was the only critic (except Salandria) worthy of respect, that I had made a monumental contribution, and other extravagant praise. In truth, I was at a loss to explain it. I understood perfectly well the purpose of the flattering messages brought to me by various intermediaries, or reported by you, up to and even during the Shaw trial. Merely transparent ploys to win me over or at least soften up my public attacks on Garrison and all his works. But now the jig is up--I can neither help nor hurt him, really, but I could (and did) do him some harm with Schoenman. Garrison was extremely cordial to Schoenman and he knew that he intended to contact some of the critics and start something going, so he should have done everything possible to discourage him from contacting me or placing importance on my views. On balance, I think this may be nothing but an attempt by Garrison to embarrass me, since I do not desire his good opinion and regard it as an encumbrance and potentially compromising (if misinterpreted--as it was by Schoenman--as mutual).

My confidential informant FW-1 indicates that Fensterwald has been visiting in Dallas, and is very thick with Arch K. and Mary F. I have still not met him but only recently refused a second urgent appeal to join his committee. I do hear disquieting things about him, though: not the wearisome business of his being a Government agent, but that he has indulged in rather unethical behaviours--such as plagiarism of ideas and misrepresenting my relationship with his committee. Which is, nil. But he told at least one person that I was cooperating completely, just did not wish my name to be used. Which is an outright falsehood.

Although I never expected to hear again from Flammonde after sending him my review of his book, he did phone a few weeks ago. He is starting a kind of NYC sub-committee of the Fensterwald CIA and thought that since it would not be directly linked to Garrison that I might be willing to join in. How stupid can a man be? With my clearly expressed disdain for his talents as an investigator, or a thinking human being for that matter, how could he conceivably imagine that I would be willing to work with him or under his leadership? This creep is only trying to start some kind of career for himself and to maintain the momentum of his personal publicity when his book came out---apparently flying saucers do not seem as promising a field for his personal build-up---and is thrashing around desperately for some kind of gimmick. He gave a lecture recently on the three assassinations (\$2.00 admission) which I carefully did not attend. But his phonecall did at least give me the pleasure of spewing out a few more choice insults of Garrison, which made Flammonde rather uncomfortable despite his statement that he is rather disillusioned now with Garrison.

Bob contracted hepatitis, as a result of drugs he was given for the other condition, and was hospitalized for 2 weeks. I went to see him and was deeply disheartened and very sad. He is very weak, and his wife's face is raw with anguish and anxiety. Yesterday, I was notified of the death of my friend Carrie, who had worked for me once a week in the apartment for 12 years, until she became ill last November.

You haven't said anything about your legal situation, so I gather there are no developments. Tom, I do think your ms. is an important piece of work and should be published. The plethora of names and details may be somewhat confusing to the general public, which has not followed the affair blow by blow like the handful of people like me, and in the final draft you will help them by identifying and re-identifying the various characters and participants.

I am glad that we have cleared up the confusion about Kevin. I thought at first that you meant that he had changed his mind a second time and had re-enlisted in the congregation after having criticized Garrison in that radio broadcast. Now I understand your original question, but do not know why he changed from gullible advocacy to outspoken repudiation of Garrison. Perhaps it is nothing more than that he was unable intellectually and morally to extend his rationalization before the Shaw trial into the dreary wasteland of the post-trial situation --though, as you say, the others somehow managed to do so. Actually, I never heard of Kevin until about the end of the trial.

That's about it, for now, I guess. All the best,

Affectionately,