

3 May 1969

Dear Tom,

Good to have your letter of 4/30/69 and the various materials enclosed. As requested, I enclose herewith the copy you had sent me of your memo on Layton Martens. Also enclosed are some clips from the LA Free Press, some dated 3/21/69 and one undated, which I had received from one of our confreres in LA (since my name apparently has been removed from the LA FP mailing list, and I am damned if I will pay honest money into their coffers for the dubious privilege of reading their peculiar brand of garbage flanked by obscenity). You might return the clips in due course.

As it happens, I did have occasion to hear from Paul Hoch recently, and very disappointing it was, too. Weisberg had sent me a copy of his letter to the NY Times Magazine on the Epstein article, charging it was libelous (eg., he had never worked for the lawyer whom Oswald mentioned). As the letter was no less than seven pages long and Weisberg was short of copies, he asked me to sent it on to Hoch after I had read it. In forwarding it, I added a brief handwritten note of greetings, and said that I was interested to know Paul's views in the aftermath of the Shaw trial. He replied on 4/27/69: "I hope you will accept the pressure of other business as an excuse for not giving my opinions of the Garrison fiasco. You are certainly in a position to say 'I told you so,' but I really don't feel that I understand what happened. The 'explanation' in Epstein's book is quite unpersuasive."

Like you, I was genuinely interested in Paul's views and not (as he may have thought) grabbing an opportunity to say "I told you so." I am therefore disheartened that he says that he does not understand what happened (one of the easiest things ever to understand, and really quite difficult to fail to understand, in my judgment). That he finds Epstein's analysis unpersuasive may be less related to its intrinsic merit than to the mistrust and hostility generated by Epstein's avid courting of the Establishment (time a new word was found to replace this overworked terminology), his increasingly overt apologia for the WR, and his inexcusably poor scholarship (eg., his failure to make an elementary check on the CBS "findings" and his dishonest reiteration of those "findings" even after he had acknowledged them to be egregiously dishonest).

You ask my opinion on the BOOK writer. I do feel strongly that the material in your diary should come before the public, but I continue to think that it should be in the form of the book you intended and even started to write. A few bits and pieces in a short article or two will not be in the proper perspective; you will have nothing to say about the way in which the material is used; and you will risk increasing Garrison's wrath and vindictiveness toward you, for giving LOOK some of its ammunition, without achieving enough to justify exposing yourself to a more militant harrassment. If you give LOOK information for a fee, it will further complicate the whole thing, morally, for by volunteering information to Shaw's attorneys and accepting nothing in return your disinterested concern for justice was unambiguous and in the mind of any fair, impartial person should outweigh and nullify the technical irregularity with which Garrison has charged you.

If you still decide to proceed with LOOK, then I would suggest that you do it in the form of an outright sale of the diary, as a manuscript (eg., just as I sold my ms. to Bobbs-Merrill, or entered into a contract with them for its publication). And that should be done through a lawyer, who will protect your rights and your interests--whatever you do or do not do, please do not trust LOOK to be fair or ethical.

Jones Harris calls me from time to time, every 3 or 4 weeks, to ask if anything is new. (If there is, I usually do not tell him, for obvious reasons.) I think you are quite right about his being too lazy ~~xx~~ to write and mail a check--indeed, as I recall, Jones never seems to take pen in hand for any reason whatever, and I think I have never seen his handwriting or his signature. He is a telephoner and as I recall it he acted as though it was a feat like climbing Mt. Everest when he had to send an order for my Subject Index. In this particular case, however, his inaction may also reflect his rather strong feelings about your "treachery" --one never knows how Jones will react, except that he will not be consistent (eg., he is quite unemotional, even tolerant, of, say, Epstein's treachery in re: the WR, although Jones himself volunteered his opinion that Ed was ass-licking his way to greater and greater success).

The present installment of the diary (pages 11-21) is no less fascinating than the preceding section. I was not really surprised to learn (page 15) that Garrison had never finished reading "Inquest." I have suspected all along that he did not have the intellectual discipline or integrity to make a thorough study of this case or any part of it, even a work so slender, so beautifully readable, and so instructive as "Inquest." So much easier to proceed from wild guess to wild goose, to listen to such oracles as Salandria (a hilarious vignette, his lecture to the inner circle), and to improvise on national networks or on page one. I loved the account of Garrison and the "code" (page 16). As you may recall, Garrison gave me the same demonstration, in a phonecall to my office back in May 1967, and after listening to him for 90 minutes or more and making notes, as well as I could, I felt that I had been in direct contact with an unmistakable manifestation of megalomaniacal cyclical psychosis (I can't think of the term I really want, indicating psychosis typified by the construction of a logical progression on the foundation of an insane premise).

Also was struck by the partying--at Barbara Reid's, and the other one where dear Haggerty was fraternizing with the whole prosecution camp. His predisposition toward the DA and staff seemed to me blatant up to and including the first half of the Shaw trial--but I forgive him a great deal for his magnificent handling of Aloysius Habinghorse (misspelled, I know). (Why, by the way, isn't HE prosecuted for perjury?)

I assure you, I am looking forward to the next pages of the diary with undiminished interest and anticipation of pleasure, since it is so rich in event and an enviable perception, on your part, of the personalities and motives of the cast--Lane, Sahl, Sanders, Jaffe, etc.

The fan mail, too, was quite interesting. I loved the one unfavourable letter, for its delicious wit and its excellent advice. Also, the student from Staten Island, in re: Lane ("he charges a thousand dollars plus traveling expenses to show his face and open his mouth"--beautiful!). But that depletes the wit, and leaves only some hilarious odds and ends, and a preponderance of cacaphony from pathetically sick and scrambled minds, basically very sad and painful to read. My office, like all large or publicized institutions, used to get its share of the traffic in those lost souls who write or even come in person to complain of radios implanted in their heads, death rays aimed at them by the government or the communists, etc.

When I look back at the events and shocks of the last 5½ years, including the changes in my own life both personal and professional, I find it a matter for some wonder that my own mental/emotional balance seems relatively intact, or at least no worse than it was before 11/22/63. Apart from the traumatic experiences that you already know about--the estrangement from so many of the other critics, Salandria, Marcus, Field, etc., and the transformation of devoted friendship into contempt and bitterness, there have been some heartbreaks that I have not recounted. One is that I have been swindled out of a great deal of money by someone I trusted unreservedly, who has turned out to be one grain of Jekyll in a tall mountain of Hyde. The other--and this, Tom, please regard as absolutely confidential and secret--is far more tragic: I learned only a few weeks ago that Bob Ockene, my editor and very, very close and valued friend, has leukemia. I can accept the other slings and arrows, but for this I am inconsolable.

Let me know what happens at the next court appearance and anything else of interest, and I will do the same. Tink Thompson will be leaving next month for a year in Europe, on a fellowship, as you may know already, and I am not troubling to send him copies of your diary at all (I don't think he is really very interested). And I have to be in Boston for the month of July, on UN business, which does not overjoy me at all or the others in my office--we are all "drafted." If you think of anything useful that I might do while there, let me know, but I have the impression that Boston is really out of the case (except for Epstein, a stone's throw away, and I feel like throwing a stone as it happens). All the best, as ever,

ENCLOSURES: (2)