

26 March 1969

Dear Tom,

Reading my back-number copies of the States-Item last night, I was astonished to find the full-page message of support for Garrison from the Citizens of New Orleans committee--in the 3/19/69 issue, I believe. That so many worthy individuals signed their names to a defense of Garrison's indefensible abuse of power, after his fiasco at the Shaw trial, parallels an event of last July--the claque that appeared at the convention hall with signs "We Love Daley" and took over a whole section of the gallery. The rally around the beloved Mayor of Chicago (by his political flunkys and ward heelers) was a desperate ploy to counteract the hatred and contempt heaped on Daley and his storm troopers from every part of the country; and the rally around Martyr Garrison suggests an acute sensitivity to the scorn heaped on him in dozens of editorials, which he deserved as richly as Daley deserved his opprobrium. Do you know anything about the genesis of this full-page ad?

One small mystery seems cleared up--the "Tom Bethell" mentioned in MAYDAY (Now renamed HARD TIMES) seems to be a Thomas B. Bethell, who authored an article in the current issue...dealing, if recollection serves, with the coal-mine disaster and the resultant militancy against the lax practices of the coal-mine operators.

Have been re-reading the ten pages of your diary (which I have not sent to Tink Thompson, as I haven't been able to use the xerox and since he seems only mildly interested anyhow). It is full of fascinating (to me) glimpses and insights. I had not known that Mrs. May Brussell had been to New Orleans or that she too was among the Garrison-lovers. But I might have known it! She called me once, quite a few years ago, and spoke of a play she had written on the Dallas assassination, and of her voluminous notebooks on the case. Shortly afterward, her husband called me while he was in NYC on business, and I had dinner with him and another man, which I remember vaguely as having been pleasant but not very relevant. I loved your comment about the uselessness of her indices on the White Russians--you are quite right, of course, and one wonders how Mrs. B. could fail to see what was so self-evident. She is supposed to be enormously rich, and I suspect she contributed her little bit a la "Truth or Consequences."

The name "Santana" (page 3 of diary) was new to me. I gather he was another lead that petered out. Also striking was the mention of Matt Herron's inability to establish a telephone link between Ruby and Oswald in January 1967--five months before Baron Munchausen proclaimed his feat of alchemy transforming "PO 19106" into Ruby's phone number.

Also in a States-Item of one day last week was a mention of your lawyer--not the name you had given me, but a name that I did not recognize. Is he a co-counsel or have you switched to a new attorney? No exciting developments of any kind to report, on my side. Please regard this next as confidential--Weisberg did me the honor of asking me to read his ready-to-publish ms. "Post Mortem" and I found it a very painful experience. It generates a crushing boredom, going over and over familiar old material, with a very few but insignificant nuggets of "new" material hardly sufficient to justify a whole book; his writing style is no better and perhaps a little worse, studded with "He did not DARE!"s and reading almost like a book-length ad for WHITEWASH and its several sequels. I think it is very smart to stop after one book on the case--although I did not stop because it was smart but because I was depleted. In fact, I greatly miss the satisfaction and sense of purpose that I enjoyed during the two or three years of doing the basic research and preparing the subject index and then writing the book. There is a lingering let-down, a sense of loss and aimlessness--but the solution is not to contrive another book, as I think can be seen from Lane's, Epstein's, and others' experiences with their follow-up books. (over)

Please stay in touch. Had any message of
(moral) support yet from Epstein? Considering
the help you gave him and the fee he got
from the New Yorker, he should at least
offer to pay your legal costs. I suspect
he will not.

As ever,
Ayn