

15 February 1969

Dear Tom,

Your letter did arrive, this morning, so that is okay. I guess I commented on CS, the CPA, rather fully during our telephone conversations this week. I had forgotten his name--which was included in material in my confidential file --and was stunned by the news reports of his testimony a week ago. As low as my opinion of G. had sunk, I was incredulous that even he would put such a vulnerable witness on the stand.

Just as I was reading the press reports on CS last Saturday, Jones Harris phoned, very dejected about it. He told me that the staff, to a man, had emphasized that CS could not be used as a witness, and could not understand why G. had overruled that advice. It was my feeling, at that time, that G. characteristically had simply failed to carry out the elementary and indispensable inquiry into the man's background--as he had earlier failed to check into the existence of a real Lee Odum or a real P.O. Box 19106--but you subsequently indicated that G. and/or his aides had every reason to know that he is a psychopath or a paranoid. I completely share your bafflement as to why, in spite of that knowledge, CS was put on the stand.

On Monday night, I had a phonecall from a guy who has been "neutral" on G., has often seemed to concur in criticism of him, but who seems to me to be privately and basically very pro-Garrison. And, in line with my impression, he had no comment on CS's testimony or history, or on the decision to use his testimony, but was only preoccupied with determining how the defense had got on to CS. He said that Gurvich had come to NYC to screen the man, and that he had probably put the defense lawyers on to him. I did not, of course, comment one way or the other. This same chap proceeded to tell me that the hearing (of Wecht and Forman) was "on" again, for Friday 2/14/69, which was news to me. (I think he gets his information on New Orleans affairs from his close friend and co-worker Sprague.)

I then called Whitewash, whose last announcement on the subject had been a bitter and angry denunciation of Salandria for having aborted said hearing of Wecht, etc. He confirmed that the hearing was reinstated, and that Salandria apparently had NOT been responsible for the cancellation but had simply concurred in it after the decision to cancel had been made. As to CS--H. Whitewash, like my previous caller, was concerned only with how the defense had got on to him, and stated flatly that it was undoubtedly another instance of federal intervention ("they will stop at nothing to destroy Jim" and etc.). I then pointed to the information I had received in re: Gurvich (already "hung" as a sheep as well as a lamb, anyhow), which kind of slowed Whitewash down to a pause, and a reluctant admission that it was a plausible alternative explanation.

I don't know how he, or Vince, or the other handmaidens would react if they knew that G. knew CS was a nut and knew that the defense knew it. I feel certain that they would find some rationalization which would leave G. somehow blameless, even victimized and martyred. Their ingenuity in this form of self-delusion has been unlimited; and I doubt that a mere CS would silence them.

By the way, one of my friends among the critics--a chap whose name would not be familiar to you, I think, as he has not published and has generally stayed in the background--visited Philadelphia last weekend. My friend, Tom, has felt as I feel about G., for the same length of time, and had similarly drifted away from Salandria because of this. A few weeks ago he had a letter from Vince, very ~~amiable~~ conciliatory and friendly in tone, and decided to see him during his Philadelphia visit. Although their meeting did not change anything basically, I was somewhat surprised to find that Vince had succeeded in causing Tom to take seriously the wild charges against Turner and Boxley--indeed, had managed to make him quite suspicious of Turner. Specifically, for sending G. a report of someone's allegation that 200 (two hundred) French Intelligence agents had been at Dealey Plaza during the shooting.

Well, a story of 2 (two) French Intelligence agents might be a plant or a trap; a story of 20, ambiguous; but 200? What could such a report be for except for laughs? Yet Tom, who is intelligent and sceptical, came away from Vince ready to regard that as serious evidence of Turner's iniquity and sabotage of G. That really discourages me.

Forgot to mention that on one of his phonecalls, Jones Harris told me that Dick Sprague had been dismayed and disappointed with the conduct of the trial, the use of CS and the recantation of Russo. If so, Sprague gave no sign of it when he called last night to relay the message about the autopsy photos.

I can only hope against hope that G. does not make as much of a hash of the Deadly Plaza evidence as he has made of his own "case" against Shaw.

Finally, there was a small item in the N.Y. Times this morning on Halleck's decision yesterday on the autopsy photos. It was a UPI item, quite brief, but at least it was not completely blacked out of the news. There was a similar sketchy mention on CBS radio this morning.

That seems to be it, for now. Take every care, Tom, and stay in touch.

All the best,