

11 October 1967

Dear Tom,

Good to hear from you and to receive your phone number. I'll probably call you one of these nights and we can have a real chat again.

I didn't think much of the Robert Oswald article, although it was more critical of the Warren Report than I expected. I have been hearing rumors for some time of a complete sell-out on his part (a literal sell-out, according to information Dick Sprague brought back from one of his trips to Dallas). His remarks about the FBI/SS went a bit further than his testimony, in which he forthrightly told a deaf Commission about the FBI's attempt to intimidate Oswald's wife. Another thing that interested me was his account of how Lt. Cunningham took him aside--on Friday, before the rifle was traced, or the palmprint identified, or the various lineups held subsequently, etc--and convinced him that the weight of evidence against LHO was crushing. I wonder what he had in mind?

Did you read the book "Plot or Politics" by Rosemary James and Jack Wardlaw? You must have, no doubt. What did you think of it? and what did Garrison have to say? It seemed to me fairly objective and properly skeptical, of the WR as well as of Garrison. Speaking of books: I am not surprised that Lane attributes my disgust with Garrison to reasons of self-interest, nor am I surprised that Garrison himself in his recent letter to Armoni (Minority of One) opines that his real problem with the "code" (P.O.19106) is that an elected official stumbled into it instead of the unhappy critic who complains so bitterly about it. Obviously, they themselves customarily act from self-interest, and find it hard to conceive that anyone should take a position out of principle or conscience, even if the penalties are heavy. In fact, my views on Garrison have alienated my closest colleagues and dearest friends, or some of them, to the point where I think a reconciliation would not be possible even if they came to agree that he is doing great damage to legitimate criticism and that he is a self-serving irresponsible mountebank. It was not always thus, as you reminded me: I did dance for joy in the first days; and both Maggie and I spontaneously and wholeheartedly said in our elation, to hell with our books (she had just been offered a contract by one of the leading publishing houses which she later signed, only to have the publisher renege--ostensibly because of technical production problems, which may in fact be the reason, although I have sometimes wondered if disillusion with Garrison did not cause them to lose interest in a book on the assassination).

I am surprised, however, that Bill Turner should have made so snide an inference. I have met him only once, and he did seem like a very open, fair, and decent guy--in fact, now that I think of it, he is doing a book for my publishers, for which my editor is performing the customary midwifery. But on that one occasion, he praised Bill Gurvich to the skies; more recently, as you know, he has taken rather a different view of Gurvich.

Phelan has not tried to contact me as he had suggested he would do, early in October. I guess it is still "early" and that I may yet hear from him. I'm curious, I must admit, to see whether he says anything about that big break in the case; but I am also uneasy at your news that he is making the rounds of the critics. I am ready to see him only if he is genuinely interested in the WR evidence; but not if he has some ulterior purpose, whether or not the ulterior motive involves Garrison. I will say what I have to say about him independently and not as part of any campaign against him by the media or others. Which reminds me of your remarks about David Chandler: apparently he was a very close friend of Garrison's, until the arrest of Clay Shaw. That is what I read in Rosemary James' book, for what it is worth. It seems that the time that Garrison spent in wooing LIFE was wasted, or worse, since the disclosure of his free-loading at the Sands Hotel is certainly embarrassing (and his "defense" rather more naive than one expects from a sharp D.A.). I thought that his issue of a subpoena to the Governor was sheer vindictiveness and headline hunting of the crassest sort. Will send you a copy of my book as soon as I get copies, in three or four weeks, I hope. All the best, Tom, as always,