

(NOT SENT" written on back)

5 August 1967

Dear Tom,

Thanks for your letter of the 1st, which was (as always) perceptive, informative, and realistic. You may be sure that I will keep your comments confidential. I do appreciate your trust and the frankness of your letters. I did take the liberty of mentioning your factual report on Vince, to our mutual friend Armond, as we have both been wondering how Vince was getting on there, and we were both pleased by your report. (I felt sure that you would not mind my mentioning that part of the letter.)

Yes, I did hear part of Tom Katen's opus, and my reaction was precisely like yours—I thought it was a long boring irrelevancy. In fact, Vince had brought it with him one day to New York, and was reading it to Armond and me, and we both grew most impatient and asked him to discontinue. As you may know, Vince is one of the researchers with whom I had been most close personally, and whom I really came to love, almost like a member of the family. Despite my deep fondness for him, and the many adventures we have shared during our researches, which create a special kind of closeness, Vince and I have come disastrously close to alienation from each other—all because of our differences on Garrison. The critical moment passed, and we have been affectionate and friendly again, before Vince left for New Orleans. I would like to think that he will return with a better perspective and a less romantic view of things. The temptation to believe in Garrison is powerful, to any worn-out first-generation critic who is yearning to work less hard, and who is affected by the undeniable charm and wit which Garrison is fortunate enough to have. But I think that Vince and the other critics have yielded to wishful thinking, and some fuzzy thinking, in contrast to their strict standards in dealing with the WR evidence.

One argument that is constantly thrown at me is, look at Garrison's enemies --NBC, Sheridan, Ramsey Clark, etc. My reply is that the fact that they are corrupt or unscrupulous does not automatically make Garrison heroic; and that I judge him solely by what he does and what he says, and not by what NBC purports he has said or done. I suspect that you are right when you say that he has a strong streak of irrationality in him; be that as it may, I regard him as a menace to legitimate criticism and authentic research. His grotesque and shifting theories and his notorious cast of sordid characters have already succeeded in removing attention from Dallas and from the actual evidence in the case, and created a preoccupation with seedy and (I suspect) irrelevant witnesses and the various by-product litigations, for which the Warren Commission and its adherents must be gratefully rejoicing.

So far as my being on Garrison's side, now or in the future, that is absolutely out of the question. I am opposed to him, for much the same reasons that I am opposed to the Commission--false accusations, perjured witnesses, and fabricated evidence. His good intentions (granted that he has them) are irrelevant--no doubt the Warren Commission could produce some good intentions of its own, the national image, stability, and the like. If trifling ~~es~~ with facts and perversion of truth can be excused on the grounds of good intentions, why are we fighting the Warren Report, and what meaning remains in such concepts as justice, or truth, or honor? I may sound Victorian, but I do not apologize for this, and I am not about to form alliances with mountebanks of any degree, who think that the ends can justify their means. I hope that Mr. Garrison will disabuse himself of any notion that I will ever capitulate to his side. It is no less impossible than the prospect of my capitulation to Warren or Liebler, who at least do not pretend to be on my side.

I had dinner the other night with Dick Sprague and saw the DCA film. I do not share his excitement about some of the "suspicious" things or persons on whom he is focusing, I think he tends to go overboard in his interpretations. But I think he is doing valuable work in trying to collate and correlate all of the photographic record, and it may yet prove very valuable. All the best, Tom, and please do stay in touch.