18 August 1967

Dear Maggie,

It was good to hear from you again, and I hope that you are all having a very good weekend in La Jolla. I thought that your letter to Clayton Fritchey was masterful. If he had a capacity for shame, he would be bleeding from all pores. I greatly resent and despise these trained poodles, Fritchey et al, whose "moral indignation" can lie dormant during assassinations, wars, and genocides, but comes to life only when the ultimate heresy—repudiation of the WR—is heard. Fritchies would attack any heretic, however irreproachable his arguments and evidence, with impartial malice and fury. I am only sorry that anyone thinks, or has ever thought, that I am part of this "pack out to destroy Garrison." It is good to know that you, at least, do understand the basis for my position and my overriding concern that criticism of the WR should survive, uncompromised, in the event of Garrison's downfall.

I suppose that the conviction of Dean Andrews for perjury must be considered a success for Garrison, and indeed it appears undeniable that he did perjure himself by equivocating instead of denying that Shaw is Clay Bertrand. His explanation of why he did this seems to me to have some plausibility; in any case, I cannot easily forget that Andrews was among the first to proclaim what he apparently repeated to the grand jury in March—that Oswald was innocent, only a patsy and decoy. What does puzzle me greatly is his naming of Eugene Davis as the real Clay Bertrand. Why? This man is an old friend and client. It is hard for me to believe that Andrews is so unprincipled and ruthless as to make so grave an allegation if it is a total fiction. On purely objective grounds, a person like Davis (not necessarily Davis himself, but someone in the same social stratum) is a more plausible "Bertrand," mixing with free-alley clients, fags, and non-Wasps, than a man with Shaw's respectability, tastes, culture, and general background. It would be disasterous if the chance that Davis is the Bertrand who called Dean Andrews on 11/23/63 is dismissed out of hand, because if he is, he holds priceless information on Oswald, essential and crucial to a reconstruction of events.

The news of progress on your book is very encouraging. Perhaps, as you say, the unparalleled indignity which Random House committed will turn out to be a blessing in disguise. I know that you will get a publisher—only the name of the house and the exact timing are in doubt, so far as I am concerned—and I hope that Random House will commit collective hara-kari when they realize the full extent of their own stupidity.

The last few weeks have been exceptionally quiet and uneventful. One very gratifying development, however, is that a very sensitive, prolonged, triangular problem (between Arnoni, Ockene, and myself—each with the other two) has been overcome. I won't even try to give a blow by blow account: suffice it to say that it concerned a jacket quote from Arnoni to be used on the back of the book. The problem was resolved when Ockene suddenly realized that he had completely misjudged Arnoni, on the one occasion when they met each other (and some 18 other strangers) here at my place. I had to put a gun in Ockene's back, figuratively, to get him to request a quote; only to have Arnoni, who is very perceptive, decline (with utmost friendliness and every effort not to cause me grief), on the (valid) ground that Ockene didn't really want the quote. In the end, he did send it—Ockene was delighted, and ashamed of his unfounded assumptions about Arnoni, and sweetness and light prevail.

Mark Lane, however, has still not sent his comments or even a reply to Ockene's letter of reminder of almost two weeks ago. I am not really surprised; and I am not even disappointed. I have always had mixed feelings about having Lane's name on the jacket, but he himself had taken the initiative in offering to provide a quote—which I truly appreciated and considered generous and thoughtful, mixed feelings notwithstanding. Recently I have acquired new reasons for hoping that his name will not be on the jacket, especially if by delay or default on his part it becomes impossible. I will have to wait until we meet again to explain the "new reasons;" suffice it to say that I recently encountered someone who was part of his inner circle for a long time, and whose experience with him was dismaying on some levels, and utterly horrifying on others (connaissez-vous Krafft-Ebbing?).

(over)

I was not very happy either about the situation that caused my letter to Vince. Not happy—that is an understatement. I did not sleep for two nights, and I am almost never insomniac. I had to take some of my old anti-asthma medications, antispasmodics which of course have some soporific qualities, to get some rest. I was so churned up with anguish and anger and disbelief, to hear from Vince what would be more appropriate from the lips of Arlen Specter—the most fatuous rationalizations, illogic, and contradictions, all in the name of Mr. Garrison's virtues as a father, a politician, an idealist, and heavens knows what else. The fact that he had no ease, by Vince's own reluctant and pained admission, only made him all the more Heroic and Magnificent and Pure. I have been very curious to know what Vince told you when you called him that night when we last talked. It would not especially surprise me if he modified his earlier statements and pronounced a more optimistic judgment than he expressed to Arnoni or to me—if he did, I hope that you will not be led to wonder if I overstated, consciously or unconsciously, what he had said. I was very careful not to do so, for the very reason that I am aware of my subjectivity and emotionalism in such a situation. We are all tempted to hear what we want to hear, and I knew this at the time.

By the way, Jones Harris called me from The Inner Sanctum, last Sunday, asking for some wildly irrelevant piece of information which I did not know anyhow. He seems to be camping there, quasi-permanently, these days. If there has to be a critic-in-residence, I wish to God it was someone who has the necessary stability, judgment, and expertise, and not this aging, Red-baiting dilettante.

Well, I seem to have run out of kind words for all our acquaintances and friends, so I had better quit while I'm behind. My best greetings to you, Joe, Sinsie, Annie, and the Most Super Canine,

Love,