

10 September 1967

Dear Maggie,

I am happy for you that you will be going to New Orleans for the trial, knowing how much this will mean to you. It is good luck, too, for KPFK to be represented there by one of the only three or four people in the world who has complete mastery of the case. It should be one of the most significant and exciting moments of the whole long travaille, for you, since you have confidence in him (and in the importance of his evidence, or some of it.) ^(Garrison) If I can write you or call you at the time of the trial in order to say that your confidence was warranted, it will give me a satisfaction that I think will outweigh any distaste at having to admit that my estimate of the man and of his case were wrong. However much we may differ on personalities, or even on evidence, we certainly have no differences in our desire for the truth about Dallas, whatever it is and wherever it leads.

The October issue of Playboy is not available yet here (I am also unable to get Argosy, again, which someone told me has an article about Ruby by his medical doctor) but I expect the interview is a favorable one. Norden called me a number of times during the spring, but as I began to realize he called me only when he wanted something, whether information or the loan of press clippings or to spare himself doing research. It was strictly one-way traffic. Not that I ever asked him for anything, but he volunteered, for example, a copy of his major article on Hammarskjold's mysterious death, and a chance to hear the tapes of his interview of Garrison. But he never followed through, and never even called at the various times he promised to phone. Eventually I got fed up with being milked, or as he put it, having my brain picked, with only discourtesy in return, and I made this known to Norden. So we are no longer in touch.

Bill Turner, as well as Popkin, has done some very favorable stories on Garrison; but there is no doubt that the attacks are more numerous and from the big-gun-media. For example, the current LIFE is certainly vicious: I am sure Garrison never told LIFE that "he is unable to see anything wrong with a prosecutor freeloadng at a Mob-controlled casino." If LIFE liked Garrison, I can imagine the antiseptic form in which this would have been reported. In any case, it does not enhance my view of Garrison when I learn that he admittedly stayed at the Sands with the management or Marino picking up the tab. I wish I could agree that he was not a knave or a fool, but I have the impression (or even the conviction) that he is unscrupulous and that his judgment is very questionable. Again, I hope that I am wrong.

I am very reassured by your clarification on the Mark Lane incident because if you had felt that I was at fault in some way it would certainly have given me pause. Your opinion has always been important to me, more so than that of many of our fellow-critics. While I am also disconsolate about the quarrels and estrangements which have developed, I can hardly submit to unfair accusations such as Lane directed to me without defending myself, in order to prevent an open schism. I can't understand why Lane feels that I have attacked him. He knows the difference between a gratuitous attack and a reaction in the form of self-defense...or even in the form of a counter-attack.

Your impression that Lane has always been anathema to me is understandable, but it is not entirely accurate. During 1964 and into the summer of 1965 I was something of an admirer and supporter of Lane. I went to his public lectures a number of times, and dragged with me as many companions, willing or unwilling, as I could muster. I sent contributions several times to the Citizens' Committee, and I cooperated fully and freely with the two researchers, Galanor and Mrs. Behrends, whose work was so great a contribution to Lane's book. Mrs. Behrends aborted our collaboration because I had the temerity to ask her to call to Lane's attention that the memo he was describing publicly as having been written by the CIA was actually written to the CIA by two WC lawyers. She was so outraged by my daring to question Lane's accuracy that she never forgave me, even when he had to publish a retraction. In this incident, Lane

certainly bears no responsibility whatsoever for the unreasonable or irrational attitude of one of his assistants...but in the next incident, he was certainly responsible. I had sent Galanor a letter marked personal, to the CC's post office box, enclosing a copy of a letter from Western Cartridge Co. Galanor told me some weeks later that Lane had opened the envelope, discarded my letter to Galanor on the grounds that it was not important, and appropriated the enclosure. I was appalled to hear this and I wrote to Lane at the time, insisting that the appropriated letter not be used in any manner without my authorization. I never heard from him; but when his book was published, I found that he had used the letter. This incident left me with a poor opinion of his ethics, as I am sure you will understand.

It was shortly afterward that you and I established contact, and I think that at that time I told you about these incidents in expressing my reservations about Lane. In spite of my resentment and mistrust of him, I refused to be tricked or goaded into attacking him, for example, on the Barry Gray program--the radio program on which, somewhat later, I met Lane personally for the first time. I was inclined to let bygones be bygones and certainly met him half-way. I saw him once more--when he asked me to help him when he taped the TV debate with Mizer and Jenner. Certainly we were most friendly on that occasion, as I think Lane himself would confirm, and I gave him complete cooperation. Between that day and the exchange of letters which produced this rupture, we had absolutely no contact except that each of us sent the other his review of the Manchester book. I was very hurt and offended by his acrimony re The National Guardian and his charge of political cowardice or opportunism or what have you...Even so, my reply was conciliatory in part, at least; and I just don't see how he can consider it an attack.

I agree that Lane has made a huge contribution in the over-all picture; how much greater it would have been, though, if he had abjured some of the corner-cutting in which he has engaged. Here I do not mean error, in the sense of careless or innocent mistake; but, rather, the kind of thing that Ray told me about--that Lane had promised no longer to include in his lectures the bit about the streaks on the back of the Stemmons sign, and then continued to use it on the ground that the audience would not know the difference. That is just too close to what the WC did; and I dislike it even more when a critic resorts to such chicanery--it tends to dissolve the line between our adversaries and ourselves, and to invite some disrepute of all criticism. If I did not pay tribute in my book to Lane's contribution, it is because these and similar incidents have left me without great respect for him and I could not have paid him tribute without stating, as I have done in this letter, my reservations and the reasons for them--not unless I intended to embark on a new career of hypocrisy. But I am concerned that you should not regard my "anathema" (perhaps too strong a term to describe my feelings about Lane, which are mixed--for Schiller and Lewis, anathema is literally correct) as gratuitous, personal, or immediate. I would have liked to remain an admirer and supporter, as I started, but if it is okay for him to appropriate what is not his, or to make misleading allegations knowingly, as about the Stemmons sign, why is it not okay for Specters and Liebelers? The differentiation between the critics and the anti-critics must go beyond disagreement on Oswald's guilt or lone guilt, I would hope, into the realm of respect for truth, or lack of it, and everything that goes with it. If it is merely a strategic conflict, but not a moral and ethical confrontation, then I am not sure that there is any real conflict at all.

It is frustrating not to hear after all about the graduate student and the bug. Oddly enough, no sooner had I mailed my last letter to you (after your reference to him) than I received a huge manila envelope in the mail, from none other. Inside was a three-page single spaced letter, pleasant in tone but impersonal, dealing exclusively with the 313 head shot. Attached was a 12-page opus, devoted to the same subject, which culminated in the hollowed-out-grassy-knoll fantasy. I put the whole thing away, gingerly; and of course I will not reply or make any other gesture. If you do ever feel like telling me about the bug, I will be interested, not merely out of personal curiosity but because it may be a general danger to which we should all be alert.

Another example is Lane's printer. Before 12/19 I/13 before he was first of Union & Spottiswood. RST came out.

In July, as I told you at the time, I was very surprised to receive a phonecall from James Phelan, and as I also told you then, I quickly and firmly made it clear to him that while I was no admirer of Garrison, I had as little or less use for NBC and its sister-media who have been covering up for the WR from the day it came out. He said that he was calling to ask for copies of my articles, having just read and been impressed with the one on the State Department; and he seemed to have nothing more in mind. I did send him copies of the other TMO pieces, two of which were my last remaining copies and which I asked him to return.

The other day they came back, with a very pleasant letter apologizing for the delay in sending them back. Phelan went on to say that he would be in New York in October and would like to talk to me some more about the evidence, presumably in the WR and the H&E. I have never refused anyone who wanted to talk about the case (to my sorrow, in some cases) and I will certainly talk to Phelan if and when he calls. It is unnecessary to say it, perhaps, but this will not mean that I am doing anything more than discussing the evidence in the WR and the H&E. If Phelan or anyone else tries to recruit me, he will hear a very rude rejoinder.

Speaking of rude rejoinders, I have been wondering why Jones Harris has suddenly stopped calling completely, when he has always called on returning from his visits to New Orleans. I think I now know why. It seems that he was caught in the act of prying into someone's briefcase. In the briefcase was a letter I had written, in reply to someone who had just encountered JH for the first time and had written to me expressing his astonishment and revulsion at JH's behavior. In my answer, I was quite uninhibited in my views on JH--indeed, the views that most of us have of him. His unusual silence convinces me that he must have read all or most of that letter. Well, let him not pry into other people's briefcases, next time...which will not stop him from playing the East-coast "graduate student," I suspect, where my book or I am concerned.

In spite of everything, Harold writes me that he has already helped my book, during an appearance on a Boston radio program. Looks like I just can't stop him from "helping"! I guess I'll have to resign myself to this assist and all the consequences thereof--trying to forestall it is like asking Niagra to flow skyward.

I am glad that you will be having both Simsie and Joe at home, for a while at least. Simsie is a beacon of light and a center of cleanliness in a darkening and dirty world--how much I hope that she and her generation will have the chance to make a better life and a better world. I spent most of today with my oldest niece and her four youngsters, ranging in age from 18 months to 12 years...and my heart really ached for all children, for the world in which they will have to live, which is waiting to do them such damage or mutilation. No, I have not yet met Mr. Right, and I am growing impatient, because it seems more and more like marriage is in the offing. He took Susan to meet his parents and one of his married sisters, last weekend; this weekend, they are away at the Hamptons. She looks radiant and seems very happy, not with mere superficial excitement but with real inner peace and confidence. This much, at least, is good, and I am grateful for it. Dear Maggie, how I wish this Garrison thing could be resolved, so that it is no longer a shadow separating us, even to the extent that it does now, however little that is. Be well, and be of good heart, because either way, we will never stop until we do uncover the truth, whatever and wherever it is. Perhaps there is still a long road to travel, and we will all need much solace. My love to you and all the Fields, and to Annie,