

10 October 1967

Mr. M. S. Arnoni, Editor
The Minority of One
155 Pennington Avenue
Passaic, New Jersey 07055

Dear Menahem,

Jim Garrison's letter to you dated October 4, 1967 reveals some uncertainty (at the top of page three), either about the masculinity of William Gurvich or about the identity of the writer of your editorial, "Garrison and Warren: Anything in Common?" If it is the latter that puzzles him, he has apparently overlooked the statement in the masthead of TMO, "Unsigned contributions are written by the editor." And no one who knows you could fail to recognize the absolute independence of your judgments or your invulnerability to influence or persuasion.

Mr. Garrison proclaims that he is "right" but here are some examples of his inaccurate and misleading pronouncements:

(1) In an interview broadcast in Los Angeles on April 3, 1967, Garrison charged that page 47 of Oswald's address book had been suppressed. In fact, it is published in full (Exhibits, Volume XVI, page 54).

(2) In a legal instrument released to the press on May 13, 1967, and on subsequent occasions, Garrison has claimed that the notation "P.O.19106" appears in Oswald's notebook and in Shaw's, and that it is a cryptogram for Ruby's unpublished phone number. The notation in Oswald's notebook is actually DD 19106 (the Cyrillic "D"), as may readily be seen (Exhibit 18, Volume XVI, page 58). This invalidates the so-called cryptogram.

Mr. Garrison, instead of confronting the fact that the "P.O." is a "D D," suspects that "his real problem here is simply that an elected official happened to stumble across it instead of the unhappy critic who complains so bitterly that such a thing could be possible." This is not only petty and malicious but it betrays a preoccupation with kudos and credit. Such innuendo is all the more surprising in light of the fact that it was a critic, and not an elected official, who discovered the so-called cryptogram—a critic who told me personally that he had telephoned his "find" to Garrison's office from a desk at The New York Review of Books.

(3) Garrison claimed on NBC television on July 15, 1967 that Exhibit 948 disclosed that a CIA secret report had been destroyed while being thermofaxed. This is literally true. But Garrison forgot to mention that the reference to the accidental destruction of a particular copy of the report is preceded by the words "copies have been previously furnished to the Commission," and followed by the words "we are enclosing another copy of this message" (XVIII, page 188). A legitimate criticism that Garrison might have made, instead of quoting out of context, was that although the Commission had possession of copies of the CIA secret message, it was not published in the Exhibits but suppressed. There is a difference, in that attempts can still be made to have this document declassified, while the notes burned by Dr. Humes are beyond recovery.

(4) On ABC television on September 24, 1967 Garrison alleged that a Fort Worth telephone number with a "Pe" exchange was written in "Exhibit 38," which he identified as Oswald's notebook; and that an unspecified exhibit disclosed that Ruby had made two calls to the same number on June 6, 1963. Oswald's address book (Exhibit 18, not Exhibit 38) does show the phone number "Pe 8-1951," but Garrison neglected to say that it is identified as the number of television station KUFV (XVI, page 43). Ruby made no calls to that number on June 6; he called for one minute on June 10, and for ten minutes on June 11, but on no subsequent occasion (Exhibit 2308, XXV, page 252). Many persons who are complete strangers to each other may keep a record of or make calls to the phone number of a TV station, for any number of reasons, and the fact that both Oswald and Ruby may have called that "Pe" number in no way justifies a conclusion that it constituted a clandestine link between them.


It seems clear from these examples that Garrison is not a careful student of the published documentation and that he has been less than candid in discussing the contents of the exhibits in some instances. However much he prefers to "avoid getting involved with details," it is self-evident that errors of detail can lead right to appalling miscarriages of justice, and that details are of cardinal importance in any homicide and certainly in a conspiracy that culminated in a Presidential assassination.

Mr. Garrison continues to insist that it is "simply not true" that William Gurvich was his Chief Investigator. Perhaps not; but then I am at a loss to understand why at least ~~some~~ critics and reporters told me clearly and without qualification on their return from New Orleans (before the Gurvich defection) that he was the Chief Investigator. (The ~~six~~ were: William Turner, Raymond Marcus, Robert Richter, Philippe Labro, ~~Harold Weisberg~~, and Tom Bethell. As a matter of fact, Menahem, you were present when Bill Turner gave this information and praised Gurvich very warmly.)

It is true that Mr. Garrison has said publicly on several occasions that there is no evidence that Oswald shot anyone on November 22nd---which is exactly what critics of the Warren Report, myself included, have been saying, for some three years before it occurred to the New Orleans district attorney. But it is an inescapable fact that Mr. Garrison consistently has tried to incriminate Oswald in the conspiracy that culminated in the assassination of President Kennedy. He has alleged that Oswald had clandestine meetings with Shaw, Ferrie, and Ruby, and that he received money from Shaw on two occasions. He has alleged the presence in Oswald's notebook of incriminating notations which link him covertly with Ruby and with Shaw. But he has sought to substantiate these allegations with evidence that is contrived, taken out of context, or mistaken, and with testimony by two witnesses that is inherently bereft of credibility.

Consequently, I regard the Garrison investigation as a mere sequel to the Warren Report, in which misrepresentation and error serve repeatedly to incriminate Oswald in the conspiracy, even if he is exonerated of firing the shots. As I have said on an earlier occasion, one is not obliged to take sides in a conflict in which both parties (the Warren Commission and the District Attorney) have shown disregard for truth and readiness to accuse Oswald on the flimsiest grounds.

Yours faithfully,


Sylvia Meagher
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cc Jim Garrison, et al