

28 December 1967

Dear Philippe,

Yes, Garrison did jail Aaron Kohn, as the curtain-raiser on a new campaign of garrulous and grandiose headline hunting and a new series of the most irresponsible, dishonest, and ominous excesses. I have had to make two visits to Miami this month, because my father became ill just at his 80th birthday and is hospitalized there. On my return from the first trip, I found the States-Item for 12/15/67 with a huge headline, "Kohn Freed By High Court." The story said that the Louisiana Supreme Court had ordered Kohn released after a night and morning behind bars. What was involved, apparently, was Kohn's refusal to reveal the identity of his informants--although what was really involved, I suspect, was Garrison's vindictiveness toward a man who had stood firm against him, and insisted on his rights. The release is good only to 1/15/68 and it is possible that Garrison will continue his vendetta against Kohn. It is a scandal and a disgrace and I hope that you will be able to expose this rotten affair.

It is true indeed that Mark Lane has moved to New Orleans and spends his days in Garrison's office, where his status is somewhat ambiguous. The staff detest and distrust him but don't know what to do to get rid of him, since Garrison gives him carte blanche. They are a pair! Also with Garrison to the bitter end is Ramparts magazine, which gives him the cover and a long long article in the current issue (January 1968). And, of course, such lumpheads as Penn Jones. Penn is so angry with me for my criticism of Garrison that he has not even acknowledged receipt of the signed copy of my book; he has broken all contact with me, which is just as well, as I have less patience than ever with the coterie of Garrison supporters.

Frankly, I don't know how my book is doing. I have had some wonderful reviews, and a few disparaging and denunciatory ones too (Bickel, Sparrow). Bobbs-Merrill does not advertise, and their sales figures seem to be always two years behind. But I am not at all disturbed about this, because the main thing was to get the book onto the record, and I feel certain that in due time it will serve its purpose. The only news I have is from the Sauvages, who called last night to relay some information their son had picked up at Scribners or Brentanos, to the effect that Accessories is selling well, better than Six Seconds in Dallas, and is more prominently displayed.

I am delighted at the news of your book and I congratulate you warmly on this triumphant success. I only wish that my command of French was better, so that I could read it when copies become available. Did you send a copy to Sauvage, by the way?

Whether there will really be a Shaw trial, in February or at any time, is still problematical. Garrison has lined up a set of "witnesses" seedy beyond belief--drunks, psychotics, pathological liars, borderline crooks, etc.--and he may decide to gamble that the weight of their "testimony" will overcome the lack of any semblance of credible evidence and Shaw's denials. He may even manage to convict Shaw, whom he must know to be absolutely innocent. Incidentally, I hear that Ed Epstein is writing a long article on Garrison for The New Yorker--not, I suspect, in praise of him. I was really shocked that Richard Popkin wrote a long apologia for Garrison and that the NY Review of Books, for all its pretensions, printed it and seems also to back Garrison. If you do come for the trial, do try to plan some time in New York so we can chat, if you can. Meanwhile, my warmest good wishes for the New Year and renewed congratulations on the great success of your book.

Sincerely,