

9 August 1967

Dear Philippe,

You will be interested to know that Penn and I quarreled, for the first time in our acquaintance, about the merits of Mr. Garrison. Penn is among the hottest supporters of the district attorney, and you know already what I think of his so-called "investigation." If Garrison has done nothing else, he has certainly served to divide and embitter the critics against each other.

He must have the most phenomenal charm and plausibility for those who meet him personally. One of my closest and valued friends, Salandria, has been championing Garrison all along, arguing that he must have a real case or the Government and the TV networks would not try so hard to destroy him. But now he has made a visit to New Orleans and returned discouraged and dismayed: there is no case, no evidence, nothing. He did not say this to me outright but was rather evasive. However, I was able to ascertain from what he said to other people that in fact this is what he found, after studying all the files and having carte blanche to look at everything and to ask any questions.

The really terrible thing is that even now, when he has been compelled to recognize that there is no case, he is more committed than ever to Garrison. He says that Garrison is only human and has made errors of judgment; but his motives are pure, he is a wonderful man, a model father to his tots, and a real hero. Salandria even had the audacity to ask me how I could be so sure that Shaw is innocent. I could hardly believe my ears. Can a critic of the Warren Report really have become so befuddled in his thinking as to challenge the presumption of innocence of any accused man, be he Shaw or Oswald, and when he knows and concedes that there is no case against the accused?

Salandria also urged that "there should be no vicious attacks on Garrison." When I asked him, what kind of attacks? he modified his words and said, "no attacks." Perhaps you will remember the last paragraph in Sauvage's introduction to his book, in which he referred to the audacity of those who proclaimed Oswald's guilt but demanded that those who felt doubt should be silent; and his statement that to keep silent in this case would be to consent to an injustice. Is there any difference between Salandria and "those who proclaimed Oswald's guilt" and tried to silence in advance any doubts or questions? I find no real difference, and it is a bitter thing to hear such a thing from a fellow-critic in whom I used to have absolute trust and with whom I had the closest cooperation and friendship.

Most of the other critics take a position generally similar to Salandria's. Penn, for example, asked me how I dared to sit in judgment of a district attorney, when I had never held public office? Although I found this rather comical, I merely reminded him that he had never questioned my credentials to criticize the Chief Justice or his Commission, and I felt no less qualified where Garrison was concerned. I suppose that it is only a question of time before the critics are forced to realize that their faith in Garrison has been misplaced, and that their hero cannot back up his grandiose claims with evidence. But even if we do find ourselves in agreement on this, at some future time, I think it will not be possible to restore the sense of comradeship and unity that existed among the critics in pre-Garrison days. And this is very sad for everyone except Liebeler, Specter, and Nizer. But there it is! I only wish that the critics had had the same courage and honesty as you had when you reconsidered your first impression of Garrison in the light of his subsequent performance. All the best,