

20 May 1967

Dear Philippe,

Your letter of the 17th arrived this morning at the end of a week during which I have experienced a total disillusionment with Garrison. Let me summarize. On Friday night the 12th of May there was radio news that G. had decoded in both Oswald's and Shaw's address book the unpublished telephone number held by Ruby in 1963. No sooner did I learn of this than I had a phonecall from Ray Marcus, from the airport, where he had just landed after spending four days with G. in New Orleans, and testifying before the grand jury about the Zapruder film (on which Ray has specialized) and other photo/film evidence.

Ray came over and we spent the next 24 hours in shouting at each other, in our disagreement about G. Ray was even more ecstatic than ever, after meeting G. personally. He was armed with a huge book on crime and the law, the proceedings of a symposium, to which G. had written a very impressive introduction--lucid, literate, erudite, and with all the right passions and emotions and perceptions about Man. G. is very preoccupied with Eichmann and the Nazi inhumanities and unspeakable bestial crimes, seemingly with genuine horror and deep feeling that Man must learn to love his fellow-man or we are all doomed. In short, his introduction to this book reveals a man of conscience and morality whom we must all have every reason to admire.

Ray at once insisted that I read this introduction, and later thrust it also upon Kupferman and then Salandria. Ray was so transported by these "credentials" that he did not even trouble to read another document he had brought with him--a copy of G.'s reply to the Court (to the motion of Clay Shaw's attorneys for the return of his property) in which he explained in detail how he had decoded the cryptogram "PO 19106" in both notebooks and arrived at Ruby's unlisted number. However, I studied this with greatest care, and worked out the exercise according to G.'s specifications. And, indeed, it did work and I got the same results.

BUT when I examined Oswald's notebook the next day, after Ray had left for Boston, I was beset with chilling doubts. What G. called "PO 19106" seemed to me to be clearly "DD 19106." Furthermore, as Sawage pointed out, it appeared on a page of the notebook which was clearly written while Oswald was in the Soviet Union. And while one could believe that he wrote in code Ruby's number sometime in 1963 in Dallas, one can hardly imagine that he wrote it earlier, when he was in the USSR! In addition to these two nullifying factors, I could name at least three more very serious objections but I will not take the time here to go into them.

At any rate, I was so troubled that I called Ray and Vince on Monday night. Both said at once that it was my duty immediately to inform G. of these objections, confirming what I knew already but felt very uncomfortable about doing (since I had already criticized his statement that a page was missing from the notebook which in fact appears, as I mentioned in my May 1st letter to you). However, I did send him an airmail registered special delivery letter first thing on the morning of the 16th, setting forth the two arguments--that the PO was really DD and that the page was written in the Soviet Union--but taking a very friendly and respectful tone.

The next day I received a call at my desk in the office from New Orleans and was asked to hold on for G. While I waited I felt considerable apprehension, imagining how angry or hostile he would be. But when he came on, he was as sweet as sugar, and never said one word about the letter I had sent him. Rather, he began to ask me what I knew about a certain photograph of an unidentified man which originated with the CIA and appears in the Exhibits. Finally, I asked him if he had received my letter, and waited in considerable suspense and anxiety to hear what he would say, because in sending it I had acknowledged to myself that however reluctant I was to believe that G. was a fraud or a phoney or worse, his response would have to serve as proof, one way or the other, of his integrity. And that if he was evasive and irresponsible in answering the two specific objections to his claim of having decoded Ruby's number, I would no longer be able to persuade myself of his fundamental honesty without surrendering my own.

Because, and do we need new proof after the Warren Report, one cannot be honest or honorable about the huge issues unless one is also honest about the small details.

So, when I asked if he had received the letter, he replied very casually, yes, and that my points were "well taken," he said in a patronizing way, but (brushing the points aside forever) he had now decoded three more numbers in Oswald's book --Clay Shaw's telephone, and those of the New Orleans FBI and CIA offices! He said that the press was deliberately blacking out the story, no one had printed it, and he had even called you in Paris to break the story there! Next he proceeded to explain in great detail which numbers and which pages of the notebook were involved, and in each case he went step by step through the calculations by which he had decoded the numbers. No longer did he utilize what he had called the rigid undeviating calculation which in his reply to the Court he had insisted repeatedly Oswald had utilized. Now he introduced every variety of variation, so numerous and promiscuous that he even felt embarrassed enough to seek to justify them. How? By claiming that Oswald had been "subjective"! That Oswald (not G.) had introduced the wild series of variations from the so-called rigid code!

When he had finished the long complicated explanation of the decoding of the so-called FBI phone number, I asked diffidently if that number did not appear in the telephone directory. Yes, he said impatiently, but Oswald enjoyed these cloak-and-dagger exercises, the only time he was happy was when he was playing the part, serving as the secret agent.

The three new decodings I did not even have to check in the notebook--it was enough to hear them to understand how he had contrived and struggled to produce by hook or by crook what he wanted to produce. To be quite honest, as I listened to him my blood became like ice-water, for it seemed to me that he might even be mentally unhinged, if he himself believed what he was saying--even worse, he was corrupt and without respect for the truth, and would do irreversible harm to the credibility of all the critics, not only himself.

After this phonecall from G., and despite his grand and glorious statements, and regardless of what the other critics may think (Weisberg, Jones Harris, Popkin, and many others are completely sold on him after visiting New Orleans, some of them more than one visit), I have not one vestige left of any confidence in him. On the contrary, I am deeply dismayed and horrified, for the danger he ~~manifests~~ presents and the harm he is likely to do are incalculable.

Coming to the end of this long painful recital, it is clear that you and I are in substantial agreement with each other, and with Sauvage, about G. Apparently it will take my other colleagues considerably more time before they begin to see things as they are--now they are gloriously intoxicated with the "savior" G., whom Ray has called modestly "the greatest man in the country." Well, at least he did not say "in the world!" You cannot imagine how much I resent that this charlatan has come along, spewing forth all the fine courageous words, only to discredit and perhaps ruin three years of excruciating labor and honest search for the truth by the critics who have worked unselfishly and with respect for fact and truth (I do not include here some so-called critics who have no real interest other than publicity and profit). I am in the same state of despondency as I sense in your letter--despondency and also disgust.

The New Yorker magazine is doing a major piece on the critics in about two or three weeks, be sure to see it. I think it may be an objective article, I was well impressed with the writer when he interviewed me last October or November. CBS is doing three one-hour programs, but I am convinced that they will be slanted in favor of the Warren Report. Please write again soon. I suppose, having survived so much, we will survive G. also--but at great cost. All the best, dear Philippe--it is good to have an honest friend whom one can trust, who does not deceive himself or refuse to give up a position once taken. My regard for you is all the greater.