

1 May 1967

Dear Philippe,

Time has slipped by since our last exchange of letters but not a great deal has happened...Several of the critics came to New York on April 15th for the huge demonstration against the war...we could have had a Critics' Contingent, but we had no signs prepared...The next day some 12 of us gathered together for talk, mainly about New Orleans and Garrison...Sauvage had been eager to hear from those critics who have passionate confidence in Garrison their precise reasons...I must admit that their explanations were weak, in fact and logic, and that their position vis-a-viz Garrison seemed rooted fundamentally in "faith"...The discussion drove me from a kind of troubled position on the fence closer to Sauvage's position... although I still do not share his views as a totality...I still think it is entirely possible that Garrison has made some bad errors of judgment and strategy, but remains fundamentally trustworthy...And, in fairness to those critics who defended him ardently, two of them at least admitted that they do employ a double standard in showing tolerance for Russo's dubious story while denouncing the Brennans and Markhams.

One of the guests had brought a tape recording of a lengthy interview of Garrison conducted by Mark Lane and Mort Sahl early in April...This was supposed to overcome the misgivings some of us felt...While I did warm to some of Garrison's remarks on the tape (e.g., "Liebeler is a fool!"), I did not think that he came through as quite so much of the super-intellect and super-progressive as had been suggested by his admirers...Some of the remarks that most excited them were little more than cliches...And, to be honest, I can hardly understand the entente which Garrison has established with Mark Lane, against which he had in fact been advised by a TV reporter who is extremely sympathetic to him...Still, I scarcely go so far as Sauvage goes, and remain generally "pro" Garrison, although with somewhat diminished confidence, in the wake of the James Phelen article in the Saturday Evening Post, which you no doubt have seen. That served to double the scepticism that I had already felt about Russo...

Incidentally, I have finally heard from Garrison. Between February and end of April I had sent him information and material fairly frequently, without ever receiving any acknowledgment that it was received, read, or useful in any degree. I assumed this was not calculated rudeness but merely the result of an overload of work, mail, and concentration on more important matters. However, one of the comments made by Lane and Garrison on the taped interview--to the effect that a certain document had been suppressed by the Commission--caused me to send Lane a brief letter, pointing out that in fact this document had been published. I sent a copy of the letter to Garrison, for his information, and received a reply with dazzling speed. He explained at some length the reasons for his charge of suppression of this particular document; and, indeed, he had good grounds for his assumption that it was suppressed, for it was on a list of classified documents which he had obtained from the Archives. But I had the same list and recognized that a number of documents on it had in actuality been published. The FBI and other federal agencies are so unfamiliar with the contents of the 26 volumes that they do not even realize that documents which they list as "confidential" or "secret" have found their way into the volumes of Exhibits. Garrison, of course, could not be expected to know that; and Lane's forte is not in this area of evidence.

In any case, Garrison's letter included a handwritten postscript which was very cordial in tone, and which acknowledged the receipt of the various



material I had sent and emphasized that my Subject Index had been useful to him and his staff. He wrote also that he hoped to meet me soon; but I have no plans to go to New Orleans, much as I would like to meet Garrison personally. (Yet I am reluctant to go, for fear that it might dissolve the hopefulness I still retain about the ultimate vindication of his probe.)

But Harold Weisberg has taken the plunge and visited New Orleans a few days ago. He is extremely secretive, as I may have mentioned already, and I don't expect that he will tell any of us about his visit except for tantalizing and frustrating hints. It must have been eventful, for I saw a tiny item in the NY Times yesterday, saying that Harold had gone before the New Orleans Grand Jury, accompanied by four of Garrison's assistants!

I'd like very much to know your impressions of the Phelen article in SEP, which I am sure you must have seen; and of the Garrison investigation, in the light of the developments since your visit.

Incidentally, Larry Schiller and his fellow-assassin of character have now published their "book" on the "scavengers." They gave me more generous attention than I craved, with the usual innuendo, malice, and disparagement. I am criticized for not going to Dallas to see for myself; Shirley Martin is criticized for going there and getting in the way of the authorities! They are of course very rough on Penn; and on Weisberg and Lane. And their attempts to answer the arguments of the critics are simply silly. One must be grateful that these two hucksters are so utterly transparent that no one can take them seriously, or their so-called book. Sad days, for Liebler and his colleagues, when their "cause" is taken up by two such cheap and dirty-minded ruffians.

I expect to receive the galley proofs of my book by the end of this week. Two books by other critics will be coming out at about the same time as ~~my~~ mine: one by Josiah Thompson, on the Dealey Plaza evidence (shots, wounds, bullets, trajectories, films), the other by Mrs. Field which is graphics rather than text, illustrating the contradictions and distortions. And Weisberg may have his third (and maybe fourth) book out by then--he is working on at least three books just now!

Have you read the Manchester book? It is utter tripe, totally unreliable on factual questions, and so sick in spirit and emotion that it makes me wonder if he does not belong in some remedial institution for the mentally ill.

Do let me hear from you, Philippe. With warm regards,