

27 November 1967

Dear Philippe,

Thank you for your warm letter and for the cutting from your "four years after" story. I am very happy with your comments on Accessories, for your opinion is one of those I value most especially. I have to say that never did I expect the kinds of letters, or the kinds of reviews, that I have been receiving, even before the official release of the book on 11/30/67. Almost all the other critics (not Weisberg and not Penn Jones, who have been silent, though I had a fine letter from Penn's wife) have written me the most moving and extravagant letters about the book, even critics I am estranged from (because of Garrison).

Epstein (with whom I have not been in touch because of a misunderstanding between us, not on Garrison, more than a year ago) wrote a very favorable review which appeared yesterday on page one of the Washington Post book section (Sunday edition). He sent me a private letter as well, saying that Accessories was the best of all the books, an extraordinary book in its own right, and the best that would ever be written on the subject. I was quite overcome by this, since Epstein is extremely reserved in temperament.

Conor Cruise O'Brien has written a magnificent book review/essay, in The Minority of One December issue, a really major article on the case. And Max Lerner in his syndicated column today made some favorable remarks about the book. So, all in all, I feel more than rewarded, already, and if there are unpleasant reviews, I think I will not even mind them, with such insulation! Thompson's book has been the center of attention, of course, with the Saturday Evening Post condensation and the very tough editorial. I had given him a hand with his manuscript, checking the citations and doing the index, but he had not read my book, which he saw only when it was already published. I was moved when he called me, saying in almost hushed tones that he regarded Accessories as the definitive work, and (more important) that it had made him take seriously—for the first time—the possibility of Oswald's complete innocence. This was just before his own burst into the headlines: and, when he began to flood TV and radio in interviews, he several times mentioned me and Accessories—surely unheard of. Can you imagine Lane publicizing Epstein's book, last year, or vice versa? (Lane, by the way, using his buddy Mort Sahl, co-worshipper at the Garrison shrine, has made some vicious attacks on me, alleging that I tricked him into giving the jacket quote by changing my remarks about Garrison after Lane read the galleys. This is malicious and comical, since I would have made certain that he saw my revised half-page on Garrison had I realized he would withhold his jacket quote: it was the one thing Bobbs-Merrill and I struggled over in an otherwise harmonious year—now they admit that I was right in begging them not to ask Lane to read the ms.)

I think Thompson's book has some important new findings, and certainly it has important sponsorship by a major magazine. It is more a monograph than a full study, but makes a strong case for 3 assassins. Unfortunately, there are some unpleasant developments, too; one critic feels that Thompson plagiarized his findings, one magazine feels he violated their copyright to certain materials.

Yes, Garrison does seem washed up; but this does not stop his sophomoric speeches on political philosophy and/or his wildly diverse claims about his "finds." Just plain silly...Listen: enough of all this about the case, I am so happy about your novel! I hope very much it will receive a literary prize—I had no idea it was out already. I would like very much to read it, but as you must know, my French leaves everything to be desired. Perhaps it would be a waste to send me a copy—but please accept all my congratulations, and my warmest good wishes and personal affection. Always,