

14 July 1968

Dear David,

Thanks for your letter of the 8th and the enclosed copies of the San Diego committee newsletter and of Weisberg's second letter to Open City. The letter is just about as rabid, feverish, and vicious as I would have expected. Try not to feel upset about it --the main thing is to have a clear conscience, the rest will fall into place in due time.

I am disappointed that the book will be delayed, but I do appreciate your undertaking to send me a rush copy. I am not entirely sure where I will be during August: if I can manage, I would like to get away for a while, perhaps make a trip abroad, as I have worked every summer since 1964 and really need some rest.

Incidentally, I am on vacation now (though I find that I am still putting in long days of work, on correspondence, visiting firemen, etc.) and have no access to a xerox. For that reason, I cannot send you a copy of the long, long letter I finally did receive from Clay Shaw, just a few days ago. Shaw is obviously a highly cultivated man, he writes extremely well, and is very courteous---but I was greatly disappointed to learn that he seems to feel that either Garrison or the WR must be right, and since he knows (as we do) (and more so) the kind of mountebank Garrison is, he is convinced, sincerely convinced, that the WR is absolutely right in its central findings. He offers the usual arguments: why would Warren lie, Oswald was a disturbed person, just the kind of man to do such a deed, and on and on, with every cliché and stereotype imaginable, though expressed with originality and elegance.

I am increasingly alarmed at what seems to me the most dangerous possible trend ---that is, that as one person after another becomes disillusioned with Garrison, he tends to be or appear to be defending the WR. Certainly I was shocked and angered by the tone and contents of Epstein's article in the New Yorker insofar as he referred to the WR and I disassociate myself completely from those parts of the article. I have tried very vigorously all along and right up to press time to get Epstein to modify the pro-WR tone and the explicit statements supporting the WR "findings" and hoped that I had succeeded---until I read the damn thing in print. I wrote to him immediately, expressing my feelings about this; and I think I will write again, and a tougher letter. What did you think of the article? It is devastating to Garrison; but I suppose those gullible slobs who "believe" in him will chalk it all up to lies by Epstein and his sources and renew their cry that he is an agent for the Establishment. (I wish it was that simple; but Epstein's mind and motives are much more complex and subtle, and he can best be understood in terms of his innate leanings and his personal ambitions to "make it" in every sense, not the least of which is fame and money.)

There were no emissaries and no mutual friends bearing messages from RFK to Garrison. There was only Jones Harris, who supported me completely when I said at a public meeting that the story was completely false from beginning to end. That was two weeks ago, at which time Jones was still one of Garrison's intimates and advocates, and was in the process of cooperating with Lane (distasteful as that was to him), Robert Silvers, and Popkin on arranging a public appearance by Garrison in New York, in a theater, early in August. Just before Ed's article came out, Jones called me very excited and very hurried, asking if I would be on a panel to support or oppose Garrison after his speech. I declined, partly because I do not wish to dignify Garrison by seeming to even take him that seriously, partly because I have no intention of helping his fund-raising (he would of course get the proceeds of admissions, for his "investigation"), and partly because I don't want to be tied down to being around in August. The other night, I learned that Jones himself has pulled out of the whole thing, not just the public appearance by Garrison but the whole "investigation": the reason is---that Jones was disgusted when Garrison failed to address himself to Epstein's charges, when asked to comment on the article, but instead launched a new sensational fiction of contacts with a foreign intelligence service, AND/OR (more likely) that Garrison and his staff blame Jones for Epstein's article and for inviting Epstein to be on the panel (which he first accepted but then refused). Garrison said that if Epstein was present, he would not appear at all.

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Regarding Popkin: I never had great respect for him, as a critic, because I felt that he was too cowardly to say flatly that Oswald was impersonated by those who framed him and was innocent, but instead launched the inherently absurd hypothesis that he was impersonated with full knowledge and even cooperation. Oswald was just not that stupid. But I am even more amazed by Popkin's gullibility and plain lack of intelligence where Garrison is concerned: how can a man of academic standing and supposed intellectual discipline possibly fail to realize the pompous hollowess and promiscuous lies which Garrison has spewed out with mounting recklessness and chutzpah? And the same remarks apply to Robert Silvers, who is the editor of The NY Review of Books. Incidentally, my position on Garrison cost me (I strongly suspect) reviews of Accessories in both the NY R of B and in Ramparts.

I guess this is about all the news for now. Please continue to be in touch.

All the best,

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