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Dear Ed,

Epstein

Enclosed find a letter I sent out on July 23, 1968 to all who subscribed to the book offer, explaining that there would be a brief delay. I pulled your ~~XXXXXXX~~ envelope from the mailing, for I wanted to enclose, also, a check of \$2.75 which represents an overpayment that you made. (In response to the addendum sheet, you sent an additional \$4, instead of just ~~\$125~~ \$125)

Since that time, there was another brief delay. I am now promised delivery of the books, sometime in the next 10 days.

About your article in the New Yorker: for the most part, I liked it very much, but there are some important exceptions to that statement.

First, the good points. I think that you did a marvelous job in illustrating the general demagogic character of Garrison's investigation, and especially the specific techniques that are used by him in that regard. So close were some of your examples to my attitude towards him, that one of Garrison's California "\$1 a year men", Steve Jaffe, insinuated on the phone that I might have "fed you" that information. It is interesting that their first reaction to such criticism is not to face it, but to dream up a political theory which would account for it, in terms of some "anti-Garrison" critic "feeding you". The portico of the article where you show how an erroneous charge must be repeated to be refuted, and how a demagogue builds his reputation on that of his adversaries, is very well done.

What I dislike about the article, and think is entirely unnecessary, is your pro-Warren report tone. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ I hate to bring up this topic, without expanding on it a bit, though I originally intended to put this in a separate letter. The critics of the Warren Report ~~XXX~~ are, for the most part, people who were horrified at the murder of Kennedy, and even more horrified at the thought the ~~XXX~~ conclusions of the Report were wrong and the Report a coverup. Let's divide them into hard-line and soft-line critics. The political theory espoused by the hard line critics is that the assassination was a high level right wing plot, and the purpose was to heat up the cold war, change foreign policy, etc. Anyone, of course, is entitled to hold these theories. They are just theories, at present. What I think has been proved, beyond any question of doubt, is that the Report is in error on the sole-assassin thesis. Accepting, if only for the sake of argument, that this is the case, that still does not necessarily mean, if there was more than one shooter, that there was a politically significant plot to shoot Kennedy. It is possible to have 3 or 4 "low level" kooks shoot the president, and the implications of such a plot are simply not the same as, for example, if Lee and Rusk were involved. The number of shooters, in other words, is simply not a valid indicator of the political significance of a plot. (The preceding sentence ~~XXX~~ assumes, for the sake of argument, that there was more than one shooter).

If there was more than one shooter, in any case, any student of political science would be interested in how a governmental Commission missed such a fact. If there was more than one shooter, and there was a high level plot which was either concealed from the Commission (by a conspiracy) or by the Commission (from the public), then we are dealing with an entirely different kind of situation.

If either ~~XXX~~ of these situations is the case, only a scrupulous concern for logic, fact, and evidence will ever cause it to be unearthed by independent historical research.

I think you would agree that a conspiracy theory, which is nothing more than a hypothesis structured on an elegant political theory, which turns out to be structured on a series of "if statements" is no substitute for evidence. Yet this is precisely the flaw in the thinking of the "hard liners". They tend to substitute the political theories they ~~are~~ are at home with, for evidence.

"Because the autopsy x rays and photos were withheld, they must prove there was a conspiracy" said these people before they were turned over to the Archives. And after that turn over of photos and xrays? A new line: "Because they were turned over to the Archives, they must be forgeries". This goes on and on. "Because Garrison is being attacked by the establishment, he must have something". "Because Shaw is trying to avoid trial, he must be guilty." "Because Bradley is trying to avoid extradition, he must be guilty." "Because Thornley is NOT fighting extradition, he is "pretending to be innocent"."

I could go on and on. You know this type of thinking, and are quick to spot it and ridicule it when you see it. I, too, have political theories. But I ~~XXX~~ always, I hope, use the word "if" in the right place. I try to keep separate, in my mind, where the hard evidence ends, and where political theories begin. Political theory is a guide in your search for evidence, it is not a substitute for it.

Instead of pointing out this situation to your readers, and of showing them the faulty logic behind the ~~XXXXX~~ misuse of speculation in the search for truth, you write as if to attack all speculation as the product of unbalanced demonical minds. I think this is grossly unfair. There is an instructive lesson to be learned here, as to how to approach a complicated fact situation, yet you put yourself in the position of snickering and sneering at these people simply because they speculate of high level plots at all.

When Marcus went to New Orleans and showed Garrison his sketches of the noorman picture interpretations, Garrison then suboned that in his theory, and announced to the nation that he had located pictures of 5 men behind the grassy knoll. What is wrong here is Garrison's method, yet you went off and attacked the pictures, as if only some kind of a nut could see images. You have the right, again, to point out that photographic interpretation can be subjective, but why the snickering tone, as if to say "an image can be valid, because only one man assassinated the president and the warren report is right"?

Basic to all of this, I think, is the fact that when you wrote Inquest, and assuming you had the courage of your convictions and believed that the SBT was wrong, that you were willing to pass off such a contrived theory as "political truth". If the SBT was indeed the premediated construct you argued for in your book, I cannot possibly understand how you could call that political truth. I can understand your wanting to put your moral judgement as the Commission's work in terms that are printable and suitable for a civilized non mud slinging discussion, but "political truth", if you believed what you found, is not a valid description. Worst of all, it gives it a orwellian dignity of "dubble think". It raised, in my mind at least,

