

295 Harvard Street  
Cambridge, Mass  
August 12, 1968

Dear David

Thank you very much for your letter. I have had very little intelligent criticism (About 80 letters lauding the article and about 4 paranoid abusive ones) and it will help me in writing the book. Perhaps in the preface I can clarify the tone towards the Warren Commission.

Comment  
urge rewrite  
80

I've heard a good deal about "being selective in fact-choosing", as if there was some other way to write. A writer conveys a feeling he has about an event, not by stating opinion, but by choosing what he feels to be relevant. (Take for example the idiot criticism in the Free Press about saying Garrison changed his name: First of all, the New Yorker or any decent publication would demand you explain why someone's first name be a nickname less someone thing the author is indulging in informalities. Second, it suggests a desire of Garrison's to appeal to the people (Not James or Earl etc), third, for those who care, there is a parallel between Joe McCarthy (legally changed from Joseph R.) that can't escape a student of Garrison's/.

I hope we can discuss some of your criticisms in person someday, as they don't really lend themselves to justification via letters. But, in a nutshell, I think Garrison has cynically framed person he has known had no connection with the assassination (If you don't agree on Shaw, Andrews, Chandler, you'll agree on Thornley), used the powers of his office to suppress dissent (Walter Sheridan, Townley, and much more), and has appealed to the worst instincts in the American people (His agitator approach is much like the Nazi agitators of 1940, "Wide, Prophets of Deceit"). The Warren Commission is a completely different kettle of fish, and the only similarity I can see, is, for different reasons, neither Garrison or the WC established the truth. And if I didn't use the article to berate the WC it is because I find the Garrison phenomenon more interesting-- and dangerous. And I want to trace out the rise of a demagogue not beat dead horses (again).

Yes. I'm writing about Thornley in a chapter I'm doing now. Any clippings you have will be helpful. Maybe I'll send it to you for comments when I'm finished. And of course I'll call when I get a chance.

Comment

Best regards,

Ed Epstein