

11818+1/2 Dprothy St.
L.A. Calif. 90049
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Dear Sylvia,

My phone call to you last Friday evening is one of the longest ones I have ever had, long distance. If there are never any such calls, however, it is difficult to get to know someone as some things are hard to express in letters.

Before any more time passes, I want to make a few comments ^{that} will prevent the occurrence of any situation that could be a cause for any discomfort or embarrassment.

I am not dealing with any of the Warren Report critics in regard to my new work. This has been my policy since I started to work full time on this case, in the fall of 1966. There are people with whom I have perfectly cordial relationships (such as Fred Newcomb, or Bill O Connell) yet with whom I do not discuss even the existence of such matters.

The reasons for my reticence are varied and have changed slightly since I started (when there was no Garrison). At that time, it was quite obvious that I could not make the inquiries I wanted, get the interviews I wanted, and could conceivably affect the declassification and availability of certain materials, if I let my work leak out and become a matter of public knowledge, in some unfinished, speculative state.

Once Garrison came on the scene, the reasons became compounded, for I wondered just what he had. I went through a short period thinking that my work, and his podium (with its subpoena powers etc) might make for a nice combination. That, for more than any other reason, was why I wanted to meet him when he was out here in September of 1967. The result of that meeting was to convince ~~me~~ that I could only harm my work by mixing it up with his investigation, because of the type of person he is, and the standards he brings to bear to the entire thing he calls an "assassination investigation". Finally, after Kerry Thornley was charged, the breach became absolute.

Under no circumstances will I do anything to lend credence to his case. For some time, it has been a worry to me that he should accidentally validate his case and hurt innocent people by discovering the existence of valid information I have, and promulgate it from his courtroom as if it were always a part of his New Orleans conspiracy theory. Therefore, whatever the reasons were that I started with, the de facato existence of Garrison and his investigation has caused a situation to exist in which I have simply lowered a wall of silence between myself and anyone who is sympathetic in any way towards Garrison. Even knowledge of the area in which I am working is absolutely taboo.

Besides Garrison, there are purely personal reasons. I don't want new ideas, research materials etc. to be stolen by someone who hears about it on the grapevine. In that regard, I might add, I have little respect for some of our colleagues, such as Lane, and Harold Whitewash. There are friends, and then there are really close friends--- the kind of people who really stay with you to the end. I have been particularly careful, in this regard, not to ~~mix~~ confuse the two, so there are people who I know and speak with occasionally, but who are simply not close friends and who do not view my personal welfare as seriously as I do.

My call to Dr. Wecht, the morning I learned of the 4 dr. panel report, was the first time in years that I spoke to anyone outside of my small circle of very close friends about even the area of some of my research. It is important that that call not change the situation, fundamentally, and I don't think it will.

I have always had you in mind as someone who I'd like to have read my finished work and, once we started communicating again, I have continually wondered about how to bring up the subject, without bringing up the question of Lieber, and the events that led to our disagreement in October 1966. To bring it up out of the clear blue sky and say, "By the way, I've been working on something very important, full time, for the past two years..." seemed not too credible, so I kept putting it off, though it is something that was always on the back of my mind since we resumed correspondence.

So this is just to let you know that there will be people ~~with~~ whom you and I both know, yet with whom I will not be dealing as far as this whole book project is concerned. At various times in the past two years, I may have mentioned to various people that I am "working on a manuscript" for publication. None of them know what area it is, or any specifics such as title, section headings etc. Should such talk be raised by other parties, I'm sure you will keep this in mind. That way, no embarrassing triangles will form, I'll be able to deal with you knowing that it won't go any further; and at the same time, I won't be put in the position, with regard to people I know, of being badgered as to why you should know something they don't etc. etc.

So much for that subject. When I think back to the summer of 1966, now, with so much at stake, I really appreciate how you must have felt with the result of all of your labors lying at the complete disposal of Ramparts Magazine, to be used and abused to their hearts' content. I have not permitted such a situation to develop, vis a vis Garrison, but I really do have nightmares about the ~~mixup~~ that would result if it did.

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I am enclosing a clipping I got from the Washington Post, last Saturday I think. Does this mean Garrison has changed his ~~main~~ mind, again?? One of the fellows in San Diego told me the other night that Garrison had sent Bertel back to Wash. DC. (I can call San Diego, Berkely, and San Francisco on the UCLA "tie line" completely free of charge, so I maintain quite ~~an~~ bit of telephone contact with people in those cities). Also, given that Garrison is so utterly unpredictable, do you think your letter to Weisberg (which may have been shown to Vince) caused Garrison to make the turnaround??

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I have so much to say. Yet even with this gorgeous selectric typewriter up here in the Phycis dept building at 4 in the morning, I'm getting tired!!! But one more anecdote. I called Leitha Marcus on the phone ~~last week~~ this past week (day before yesterday). If you read Garrison's opening statement, which a recently arrived States Item contained, then you know that he intends to present the Moorman photograph (Mary Moorman's) and, "in connection with that" some blowups. Now the question is: How will he "connect up" the blowups? For Mary Moorman's original does not contain*the ~~NIX~~ images which the blowups show. Garrison would need two types of witnesses to connect up. First of all, the only negative that produces the blowups that show men behind the wall is one that I have, and got from a publisher in 1965. I still have it. The second type of witness is someone with photo credentials to explain the image, etc.

I think there is a chance that he may let Ray Marcus take the stand. Fred Newcomb and I both think something like this may ~~be~~ in the works. So that is why I called Leitha.

* TODAY

When I asked her if Ray was going to be a witness at the Shaw trial, I thought that her answer was rather evasive. She said: "He hasn't been subpoenaed". I pushed it a little, but got nowhere. Anyway, Garrison just can't present a set of blowups of men, without properly ~~showing~~ going into the story on the chain of possession of the negative which produces those blowups. When I pushed this point with Leitha, she said that Ray had sent him everything he had, which included, she said, a set of statements. One of those statements, then, would probably pertain to how he got the blowups from the original discoverer (me), but if Garrison does that, I'm sure Diamond will be yelling objection, because that is just plain hearsay. So I'm most interested in seeing what he will do.

One other thing. I asked Leitha what she thought of Speisel, and she said: "I'm absolutely appalled". She quickly added: "I just wonder who it was that slipped him on Garrison". I protested this excuse-making vehemently, adding that this was Garrison's witness. She repeated that he must have been "slipped" on Garrison, and I remarked that of course she would have to posit such an ad hoc assumption since her basic premise is that Garrison is a man of rationality and integrity. She blew up at this, told me to write some more articles "smearing the critics", "lie like you usually do", etc. and hung up.

You know, when I get all through explaining the behavior of the supporters of Garrison in terms of theories which I'm sure are the answer and that we have discussed, I still find it difficult to believe that it's all real.

Martin Waldron's dispatches of February 8 and February 9 re Speisel's testimony and the trip to the French quarter in search of the right "conspiracy" house are hilarious masterpieces of understated reporting.

(The sentence I like best is: "Have you had trouble recently with a communist conspiracy, with people following you and tapping your phones?" he was asked. 'Not particularly recently,' Mr. Speisel said.) It's almost as if Garrison were saying: "If you liberal/intellectual critics want to come play in my sandbox here in New Orleans, you have to let me play too. You can have your head-snap, your single bullet theory, and your #5 man, and I'll hear you out; but you have to not laugh and ^{wait} take me seriously when I present my Bundy, Russo, and Speisel."

It's becoming increasingly apparent, from the trend of events in New Orleans, that if Garrison had two heads, he could start a rock garden.

That's all for now, best wishes...

David

