

Epstein
Dear Ed,

I received your letter of August 12. My letter to you of August 6 was written in a totally impromptu fashion, and largely based on my recollections of the many readings I had of your article when it first came out. Shortly after I mailed my letter, I decided to reread the article for my own benefit, & draw up a rough outline of it so that I might more easily reference to it when necessary. After several close readings of the article, I thought that it would be desirable if I expanded on my general remarks that I made in my letter of August 8, and got down to specifics. The result was 9 pages of commentary which you will find enclosed. I have referenced the various points I am making to the pages in the New Yorker. The points, themselves, are labeled with roman numerals. There are seven of them.

I think point I is, by far, the most important point that has to be made. And I think you will ultimately have to come down on one side of the question of the WR or the other. Your book Inquest has already put you in print with a specific position on the question of the solo-assassin thesis of the WR, and on the question of whether the Commission, as a political entity, would knowingly endorse conclusions they knew to be false. As I point out, if you have changed either of these positions, I think you ought to indicate it.

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In your letter, you state: "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)."

I think it is impossible to analyze Garrison correctly without taking a position of the WC's Report. And I think that the position you take on the Report in turn determines what type of conclusions that analysis will lead to.

The reason I think it is impossible not to confront the question of the Report's validity is because much of the credibility Garrison does have is founded in the vacuum left by the WR. To analyse Garrison's success is to analyse the nature of the void he is filling, and how it came about. To do this involves passing a judgement on the validity of the void, so to speak, and this in turn involves passing judgements on the WR, the criticisms of it that have been made, and the people making those criticisms.

Garrison's pronouncements fall into roughly two categories:
1) those pertaining to the New Orleans aspects of his investigation (Shaw, Ferric, Russo, Bundy, codes, Thornley etc);
2) those pertaining to the Warren Report, and the evidence in the 26 volumes or in the archives.

Your article can easily poke in Garrison's statement in the first category. It is the second category, however, which has earned for Garrison much of his credibility, stature, and credentials. Yet this work was largely done by the critics. It is in dealing with these statements that you must judge the Commission's work, the validity of the conclusions of the WR, the validity of the criticisms leveled by the critics, and the critics, themselves.

It is in this area, where Garrison frequently misuses valid unanswered questions to serve the ends of his own propaganda, that you must

separate the invalid misuse from the valid unanswered question. And it is precisely in this area where it is all too easy to use the WR and its conclusions as a tool with which to attack Garrison.

I don't think the issue can be avoided. More than that, I think that far from beating a dead horse, the question of the invalidity of the WR is central to understanding Garrison's success.

Statements made by Garrison pertaining to the WR or the 26 volumes have to be distinguished from statements made by Garrison merely pertaining to his own "new evidence". In the latter case, it is only necessary to show that Garrison is factually incorrect. Whereas in the former case, it is frequently the case that he has incorporated valid unanswered questions or a valid criticism into his New Orleans conspiracy theory using an entirely illogical and invalid methodology.

(Example: the attempt to relate the multiple shooter evidence--- single bullet theory or head snap---to the conspiracy he claims to have found in New Orleans, thereby shifting the question away from Russo's credibility to matters dealing with the Zapruder film!)

If you take the tack I am suggesting, the theme of your article would be that an investigation that did not find the truth, and evidence of more than one assassin, has led to a situation in which a demagogue is having a field day. He is exploiting popular suspicions regarding a conspiracy which are well founded in fact, he is exploiting popular unanswered questions which are well founded in fact, and he is exploiting peculiar behavior on the part of the government which is well founded in fact. ^{the existence of} _{published}

My analysis, then, goes like this: The Warren Report is incorrect, and false, on at least the solo assassin thesis. The investigation was incomplete, and there are indications that the Commission was more interested in making a strong case against LHO as lone assassin than in finding out the truth. Valid published research has poked holes in the Warren Report. We need a new investigation. The existence of Garrison is a perfect example of why we need a new investigation. For he has entered a vacuum of public discontent with and disbelief in the conclusions of the WR. Garrison claims to have found the conspiracy which killed President Kennedy. On close examination, his case breaks down at every point. His effort boils down to an attempt on his part to foist his personal theory of a conspiracy onto a public prepared for such pronouncements due to the existence of valid unanswered questions and false conclusions in the Report. (The specifics cited here would be largely the same, but the context would be quite different, and you would not find yourself in the position of promoting the Warren Report in order to knock Garrison.)

I am enclosing the two articles I wrote in Open City under separate cover.

I hope you find the enclosed commentary useful in editing out the apologetic tone, for the WR, that is presently in the article.

Best regards,

David *R. Wall*