

Dear Ed,

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 ~~\$12~~ \$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 portion 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~~ 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 solo-assassin theses. 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~~ "low level" kooks shoot the President, and the implications of such a plot are simply not the same as, for example, if LBJ 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 demonaligal 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 moorman picture interpretations, Garrison then subsumed 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 "his 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 premeditated 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 an orwellian dignity of "double think". It raised, in my mind at least,

the question of whether you were not, in fact, in basic sympathy with the moral stance of ~~XXXXXX~~ a Commission which would perpetrate such a lie, if that were the case.

Your basic feelings about this case may vary, over the course of time. For all I know, you may have felt, when you wrote your book, that there was indeed a plot afoot, not only to kill JFK, but one on the Commission to not tell the whole truth. Then, you may have changed your mind.

But I must point out this to you: when you denigrate evidence produced by the critics with a snicker and a sneer, you are in effect erecting your own political theory on "no conspiracy" as a tool to deal with their evidence, just as they erect their political theories of conspiracy to deal with the real evidence against Oswald, or even ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ to refute arguments of the solo assassin theory. Neither is warranted. Both are invalid. To criticize them, however, for their foolishness, don't resort to their techniques! What happened to that objective stance, of which I am sure you are capable.

Finally, of course, there is your own study of the Commission's work, and Sylvia's book. Your own study, I am sure, convinced you of how sloppy was that investigation. And Sylvia's book, over and over again, shows what a dishonest document the report is, in terms of its non-correlation with the H&E volumes, whether or not you believe this is the work of a conspiracy. This is still another reason why I think your pro-Warren Report tone is uncalled for. The document simply does not deserve that kind of respect, because of the way it was done, whether or not you today feel more or less critical of its conclusions than when you wrote Inquest.

Before I leave the subject, have you seen the long article on your article that appeared in the L.A. Free Press, and the comments about you that Garrison made? If not, I will get you a copy. Please let me know.

About Kerry Thornley: I would like to know very much if you intend to pursue that matter in your book. If so, I would like to render you any aid that is possible. Could you call me, on Sunday or at night when the rates are low, and let me know?

Also, if you are going to deal with Marcus' trip to New Orleans, you ought to get two items of documentation. First: the article that appeared in the Times-Herald when he was there. Second: the actual ~~XXXXXXXX~~ Garrison statement that he made, shortly thereafter, about five men. (It was on a tv show; I have the tape). (And note: it was 5 men, not the four of your article; also, dispense with that cowboy hat business. That simply is not true. Some of ~~the~~ ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ men in his sketches have hats, but I think that is only true of three of them. In any event, these facts ought to be straightened out, and the emphasis put on how Garrison issued an important statement on the basis of ~~some~~ critics interpretation of a photograph, not the way it was done in the New Yorker.)

With a change of tone, I think your book will be instructive and enlightening. With the present tone, I think your arguments lose some validity, you are shown to have an unjustified bias, and-- from a pragmatic point of view alone--you are painting yourself into a corner you will not be proud of some years from now.

Please let me hear from you, when you get the chance.

Regards,
David