

21 October 1967

Dear Ray,

I appreciate your letter of the 18th and I assure you that even if I wanted to suppress or forget my affection for the critics with whom I find myself now in unhappy conflict, I would not be able to do it. That very fact makes it all the more painful to confront the estrangement which we all tried to avoid. But personal feelings, however strong, cannot and must not influence a position that is based on principle, conscience, conviction, and self-respect. As you will see from the enclosed correspondence, I am compelled to equate Garrison with the Warren Commission in terms of misrepresentation of facts and irresponsible pronouncements about documentary evidence.

It is true that the Warren Commission accused a so-called Marxist, despite the overpowering evidence that entitled him to exoneration or at least to a powerful presumption of innocence, and by so doing aroused in individuals like us, and our colleagues, the deepest feelings of outrage and determination to expose the lies and deception. It is also true that Garrison has accused the CIA and various reactionary or fascist groups who have always been antithetical to people of our convictions, some of whom legitimately come under suspicion of complicity in the assassination, and in so doing touched in us a powerful impulse of solidarity and desire to help. I experienced this no less than others, and perhaps earlier than some, and I volunteered any help I could give and sent considerable material unsolicited. However, as I need not remind you, I became dismayed, first by Russo/Bundy and then by the "code." Had I, at that juncture, rationalized and tried to justify in Garrison what on the part of the WC and its lawyers I despised and denounced, I would have surrendered all self-respect and all claim to speak against the lies in the WR. This has already been disparaged as "bourgeois morality" by some of our colleagues, who have not refrained from nastier innuendo (such as, that I have aligned myself with the Establishment, or as you will see from Garrison's own letter, that I am jealous that he stumbled into the so-called code and deprived me of the glory of finding it myself). Bourgeois or not, it is my morality, and no friendship or threats will move me one fraction of an inch from what I am convinced is right, just, and a duty, even if Garrison is accusing the very parties whom I regard as suspect, probably or almost certainly guilty, and mortal enemies.

I do not want these people (Dallas cops, White Russians, oil millionaires, CIA, Cuban exiles, Birchers, and Minutemen, all of whom he has named as implicated, claiming in some instances to have "proof" in his files) to be accused without an iota of substantiation, by a loud-mouth who thinks he need only proclaim but not justify or demonstrate with fact. Not only is it unfair to those he accuses but ultimately it will confer on them immunity from suspicion. Such irresponsible charges, growing in number and seemingly improvised without discrimination between theory and demonstrable proof, defeat the purposes which have animated responsible critics. Garrison does not stand or fall on the Shaw case alone. He has made much wider claims and accusations, not directly related to the Shaw case. Incidentally, I am still hearing the argument that three judges sustained the arrest and remanded Shaw for trial, as a justification of Garrison's offering testimony from Russo and Bundy. We have recently learned some very interesting things about one of those judges, O'Hara; and Garrison does not deny that he free-loaded at the Sands. In any case, since I do not accept what the Chief Justice says merely because he is the Chief Justice, nor what RFK says merely because he is the brother of the assassinated President--arguments that we have all heard with sickening frequency--I am certainly not accepting ANYTHING from Garrison on "faith" and certainly not when he has repeatedly displayed disrespect for fact. In addition to the four examples (and they are only random samples) in my letter to Arnoni, there are other outright and conscious misrepresentations on his part--for example, his answer

on his recent ABC-TV interview to how he stumbled onto Ferrie right after 11/22/63. He replied that he and his staff had searched their files for kooks and fanatics and found a record of Ferrie which aroused their suspicion and caused them to arrest him. Yet it seems clear from a variety of sources, including partisans of Garrison like Popkin, that Garrison and the Secret Service got a telephone tip on Ferrie, apparently from one Jack Martin.

I do not doubt at all that you have seen what you evaluate as incontrovertible evidence that Shaw is Bertrand. But even if that is so, it does not alter one iota the facts I have elucidated or the conclusions I draw from them about Garrison's integrity, responsibility, or trustworthiness. Shaw at least has the opportunity for trial, or so it seems; what about the others accused, without identification, arrest, or transmittal by Garrison to the authorities in the jurisdictions concerned of his alleged "proof"? I judge him not by what he has been declaring since February he will ultimately reveal, but by the rather mal-odorous performance already on record.

I need scarcely say that I was deeply distressed by the rupture with Maggie. I had made a scornful comment about Garrison's "code" and she said, "I don't want to discuss it," to which I replied, sorrowfully and not in anger, "If we can't discuss that, we can't discuss anything." Although I was quite ill at the time, although this was not in any sense an ugly or angry discussion, Maggie was silent from that time onward. More recently she has conceded, in a letter to Arnoni, that there are troublesome aspects to the Garrison investigation and that he has developed "some seemingly questionable witnesses and evidenciary material." It was the questionable witnesses and evidenciary material developed by the Warren Commission that catapulted all of us into action that has changed our lives completely. Why is it okay for Garrison but condemnable for Warren? It is either okay for both, or for neither; and I feel sure that Warren also convinced himself and his supporters that his questionable witnesses and evidence <sup>were</sup> justified by necessary or higher ends. Another critic writes Arnoni that "if Garrison's case deserves scepticism, it must be a benevolent scepticism." Indeed? I do not feel benevolence toward anyone who accuses Oswald (or any other innocent person) on false and contrived evidence, be he Garrison or even be he Arnoni--for I assure you that my friendship with Arnoni would not survive for five minutes had he employed such methods. In fact, we were for a time in disagreement on Garrison, as you may remember from our big gathering the day after the peace march. I could not change his mind; he could not change mine; but soon thereafter he did change his mind, purely on the basis of further developments out of New Orleans. Even so, I found his editorial rather mild, and told him so.

If, as you say, the proof you have seen that Shaw is Bertrand does turn out to be solid and irrefutable, then I can only say that I devoutly wish that the investigation and/or prosecution of Shaw was in the hands of a more responsible and more trustworthy district attorney. I will accept Shaw's guilt, and Oswald's, only at such time as there is clear and honest evidence which justifies such a finding.

Copies of my book have arrived, somewhat earlier than I expected, last night. I had ordered jiffy bags in which to mail them, but these are not yet here. The minute they arrive, by Monday I hope, a copy of Accessories will be on its way to you. I hope that it will not disappoint you too much, but I fear that much generosity from many quarters has overstated the strength of the book and that it is certain to be a little anticlimatic. My best to you and Letha,