

JANUARY 18, 1968

DEAR SYLVIA,

I AM ENCLOSING A COPY OF MY LETTER TO THOMPSON OF JANUARY 12, BUT NOT WITH ANY EXPECTATION THAT YOU WILL CONSIDER THE FACTS THEREIN WITH OBJECTIVITY. YOUR LETTER TO HIM OF JAN 10, AND TO ME OF JAN 11, ARE OVERWHELMING PROOF THAT ANYTHING APPROACHING THAT CONDITION IN THIS WHOLE AFFAIR IS ENTIRELY BEYOND YOU-- AT LEAST FOR THE PRESENT. YOUR LETTERS SHOW ONLY LITTLE EVIDENCE OF HAVING EVEN READ THE MATERIAL PRESENTED IN MY LETTER TO THOMPSON OF DECEMBER 15, AND VIRTUALLY NO INDICATION OF HAVING SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED THE DOCUMENTATION.

HAD YOU DONE SO, AND HAD YOU NOT ALREADY BEEN IRREVOCABLY COMMITTED, EMOTIONALLY AND INTELLECTUALLY, TO THOMPSON IN THIS MATTER, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN QUITE IMPOSSIBLE FOR YOU TO SAY, ". . . NOR CAN I HONESTLY AGREE THAT HE HAS COMMITTED DELIBERATE OR (EVEN!-RM) INADVERTANT PLAGIARISM". (EMPHASIS ADDED-RM) SINCE IT IS CLEAR THAT, FOR REASONS THAT HAVE LITTLE TO DO WITH INTELLECTUAL INTEGRITY, YOUR MAIN "CONCLUSIONS" WERE DECIDED EVEN BEFORE MY LETTER ARRIVED, IT WAS "WISE" OF YOU TO AVOID CONFRONTING THE EVIDENCE. YET, I WAS NOT "DISAPPOINTED" AS YOU BELIEVED I WOULD BE; FOR IN ORDER TO BE DISAPPOINTED, ONE MUST EXPECT CONSIDERABLY MORE THAN WHAT ONE RECEIVES. YOUR BEHAVIOR IN RECENT MONTHS, AND PARTICULARLY IN RECENT WEEKS, LEAD ME TO EXPECT THE KIND OF "OBJECTIVITY" DEMONSTRATED IN YOUR LETTERS.

YOU HAVE BEEN HAD, SYLVIA--MOST OUTRAGEOUSLY AND INGLORIOUSLY HAD. IN THE MIDST OF THIS HISTORIC STRUGGLE, IN WHICH YOU HAVE MADE A MAGNIFICENT CONTRIBUTION, YOU HAVE CHOSEN TO TURN YOUR BACK ON TRUSTED AND PROVEN COMRADES IN EXCHANGE FOR THE BLANDISHMENTS OF A COUPLE OF INTELLECTUAL PROSTITUTES (EPSTEIN AND THOMPSON; AND PARTICULARLY THE LATTER) WHO, FOR PURPOSES OF THEIR DEALINGS WITH YOU TRANSFORM THEMSELVES INTO INTELLECTUAL GIGOLOS. WORSE YET, I CONSIDER IT HIGHLY PROBABLE THAT THE LATTER OF THESE TWO WORTHIES ACCOMPLISHED THIS INTELLECTUAL SEDUCTION AS PART OF HIS DUTIES AS A FEDERAL AGENT.

I WILL DEAL WITH A FEW SPECIFICS IN YOUR LETTERS. YOU INDICATE TO THOMPSON THAT YOU REALLY DON'T FEEL ANY CREDIT WAS NECESSARY FOR MY DISCOVERY OF THE 314/315 SWITCH. YOU EMPHASIZE (BY FOUR TIMES REFERRING TO MY "REQUEST" TO YOU FOR SUCH CREDIT) THAT YOU CREDITED ME IN "ACCESSORIES" ONLY TO "ACCOMMODATE" A (BY IMPLICATION, PETTY AND CANTANKEROUS) FRIEND. YOU THEN SAY THAT YOU ". . . CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT THE AUTHOR OF A MAJOR WORK MUST EXERCISE DISCRETION ON SECONDARY OR MARGINAL POINTS OF EVIDENCE, AS TO INCLUDING IT AT ALL OR AS TO GIVING CREDIT OR NOT."

THAT'S AN INTERESTING VIEW. I WOULD HAVE THOUGHT THAT IF AN AUTHOR OF A SERIOUS HISTORICAL WORK DEEMS A SPECIFIC POINT DEVELOPED BY ANOTHER TO BE OF SUFFICIENT IMPORT TO INCLUDE IN HIS OWN WORK, THEN IT IS ALSO OF SUFFICIENT IMPORT TO CREDIT THE SOURCE. YOUR CHARACTERIZATION OF THE DISCOVERY AND FACT OF THE 314/315 SWITCH AS A ". . . SECONDARY OR MARGINAL" POINT IS ALSO INTERESTING; AND IF ACTUALLY REPRESENTATIVE OF THE LEVEL OF YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE VITAL PHOTO EVIDENCE, WOULD GIVE FURTHER INDICATION THAT SUCH UNDERSTANDING IS QUITE LOW. HOWEVER, AT LEAST IN REGARD TO THIS PARTICULAR POINT, IT REALLY ISN'T ALL THAT LOW, FOR ON PAGE 22 OF "ACCESSORIES" I FIND:

"THE PRESIDENT WAS STRUCK IN THE HEAD IN ZAPRUDER FRAME 313, AND THE SUBSEQUENT FRAMES ASSUME VITAL IMPORTANCE BECAUSE THEY INDICATE THE PHYSICAL REACTION TO IMPACT OF THE HEAD SHOT, WHICH IN TURN THROWS LIGHT ON THE DIRECTION FROM WHICH THE BULLET CAME. YET THE COMMISSION'S PRESENTATION OF BLACK-AND-WHITE REPRODUCTIONS TRANSPOSES AND MISLABELS FRAMES 314 AND 315; J. EDGAR HOOVER HAS ACKNOWLEDGED THIS AS A 'PRINTING ERROR'!" (EMPHASIS ADDED-RM)

IN CONOR CRUISE O'BRIEN'S IMPORTANT AND PENETRATING REVIEW/ARTICLE OF "ACCESSORIES", "VETO BY ASSASSINATION", HE SINGLES THIS POINT OUT FOR SPECIAL MENTION,

AS FOLLOWS:

"THE MISTAKES WHICH HAVE ACCUMULATED SO CONSISTENTLY IN THIS DIRECTION (IN THE WR-RM) INCLUDE ONE VERY STRANGE ACHIEVEMENT IN THE FIELD OF SINCERE BUNGLING, WHAT J. EDGAR HOOVER NOW CALLS "THE PRINTING ERROR" AS A RESULT OF WHICH FRAMES 314-315 OF THE ZAPRUDER FILM ARE TRANSPOSED IN THE EVIDENCE AS PUBLISHED BY THE COMMISSION. THESE ARE THE FRAMES WHICH COME JUST AFTER THE IMPACT OF THE FATAL BULLET, RECORDED ON FRAME 313."
(O'BRIEN THEN GOES ON TO QUOTE THE PREVIOUSLY NOTED PASSAGE FROM YOUR BOOK)

SO MUCH FOR YOUR DISMISSAL OF THE 314/315 SWITCH AS A " . . . SECONDARY OR MARGINAL POINT OF EVIDENCE".

YOUR PRO-THOMPSON BIAS, AND YOUR EFFORTS TO SHIELD HIM, SHOW AGAIN IN YOUR ATTEMPT TO EXPLAIN THOMPSON'S SELECTION OF THE IDENTICAL SECTION HEADING, "WHICH STRETCHER?"; WHICH I HAD PREVIOUSLY USED IN "THE BASTARD BULLET". I DO NOT CITE THIS NOW AS A MAJOR POINT, FOR IT IS NOT, BUT ONLY TO NOTE THAT YOUR POINTING OUT THAT YOU USED A TITLE "WHOSE STRETCHER?" IS TOTALLY IRRELEVANT, FOR TWO REASONS; FIRST, "WHOSE STRETCHER?" IS OBVIOUSLY NOT THE SAME TITLE AS "WHICH STRETCHER?"; AND SECOND, YOUR BOOK JUST RECENTLY BECAME AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC, WHILE PRE-PUBLICATION COPIES OF MINE WERE AVAILABLE TO CRITICS A YEAR-AND-A-HALF AGO, AND TO THE PUBLIC IN DECEMBER '66. THOMPSON ADMITS TO HAVING RECEIVED A COPY "ABOUT A YEAR AGO".

ON THE BOTTOM OF THE FIRST PAGE OF YOUR LETTER TO TINK, YOU SAY:

"FINALLY, SINCE YOU DID NOT DERIVE THE TIME-CONSTRAINT OR SLOW BULLET-FAST FRAGMENT ARGUMENTS FROM RAY'S WORK, I SEE NO NEED TO COMPLY WITH THE DEMAND THAT PROPER CREDIT BE GIVEN RAY FOR THESE POINTS."

SINCE YOUR STATEMENT COMPLETELY ENCOMPASSES THE POINTS IN CONTENTION AND DECIDES THEM IN THOMPSON'S FAVOR WITHOUT BENEFIT OF EVIDENCE, I CAN ONLY ASSUME IT WAS BASED ON YOUR TOTAL ACCEPTANCE OF HIS WORD THAT " . . . HE WAS NOT AWARE THAT (I) HAD ADVANCED A PARALLEL ARGUMENT(S) UNTIL HE RECEIVED MY LETTER OF DECEMBER 15. THAT 'S A FINE IMPARTIAL WAY FOR A PRESUMABLY UNBIASED ARBITER TO SETTLE A QUESTION; DON'T EXAMINE THE EVIDENCE, JUST ASK THE ACCUSED IF HE 'S GUILTY, AND IF HE SAYS "NO", ASSUME HE 'S BEING TRUTHFUL.

IN THE SECOND PARAGRAPH OF YOUR LETTER TO ME, YOU CITE AS "A THIRD EXAMPLE" OF THOMPSON 'S INNOCENCE, THE FOLLOWING:

"I TOO ARGUED AGAINST A FAST FRAGMENT FROM A SLOW BULLET, IN EFFECT (SEE AAF BOTTOM OF PAGE 7). THIS ARGUMENT OCCURRED TO ME INDEPENDENTLY. I DID NOT PLAGIARIZE IT FROM OTHER WORKS IN WHICH IT APPEARED. (I WROTE THAT SECTION OF MY BOOK IN SEPTEMBER 1965). SINCE I KNOW THAT WHAT I WROTE IN EACH CASE WAS LEGITIMATE AND INNOCENT, I CANNOT ATTRIBUTE SINISTER MOTIVES TO SOMEONE WHO DID THE SAME OR SIMILAR THINGS."

ACCEPTING YOUR STATEMENT AT FACE VALUE, I WAS RATHER SURPRISED TO LEARN THAT YOU TOO HAD COME TO THE SAME CONCLUSION (OR A SIMILAR ONE), AND HAD WRITTEN OF IT IN 1965; FOR I SINCERELY BELIEVED WHEN WRITING "THE BASTARD BULLET" IN JUNE AND JULY OF 1966, THAT I WAS THE FIRST TO REALIZE THE SIGNIFICANCE AND TO WRITE OF THIS ARGUMENT. CURIOUS TO SEE HOW I MANAGED TO MISS THIS IN YOUR BOOK, I FOLLOWED YOUR SUGGESTION AND CHECKED AAF, BOTTOM OF PAGE 7; AND I MUST ADMIT I WAS SOMEWHAT SHOCKED BY WHAT I SAW, FOR THE FRAGMENT/BULLET ARGUMENT YOU REFERRED TO THERE HAS NOTHING WHATEVER TO DO WITH BULLET 399 AND THE FRAGMENT IN CONNALLY'S FEMUR -- WHICH IS THE MATTER IN DISPUTE BETWEEN THOMPSON AND ME. AS YOU KNOW, YOUR ARGUMENT DEALS WITH THE HEAD SHOT, AND THE QUESTION OF WHETHER OR NOT A FRAGMENT FROM IT COULD REACH TAGUE'S POSITION ON MAIN STREET. NOT ONLY IS THIS AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT BULLET/FRAGMENT ARGUMENT, BUT YOURS DOES NOT EVEN INVOLVE A "SLOW" BULLET.

NEVERTHELESS, THE EFFECT ON ANY READER OF YOUR LETTER UNFAMILIAR WITH THE FACTS WOULD BE TO NULLIFY MY CHARGE VS THOMPSON ON THIS POINT; FOR HOW CAN I VALIDLY CHARGE HIM WITH PLAGIARISM OR FAILURE TO CREDIT ME FOR THIS ARGUMENT IF YOU HAD IN FACT WRITTEN OF IT A YEAR BEFORE I DID? THAT YOU WOULD RAISE THIS POINT ON THOMPSON'S BEHALF INDICATES AT BEST A WOEFUL LACK OF UNDERSTANDING OF THE PHYSICAL EVIDENCE; BUT MORE PROBABLY IS ALSO ANOTHER INDICATION OF YOUR QUITE SHAMEFUL PREJUDICE IN TINK'S FAVOR.

(ACTUALLY, ASIDE FROM THE DISPUTED QUESTION, THE REASONING YOU USE IN YOUR ARGUMENT ON PG 7 IS FAULTY, FOR REASONS I WILL NOT TAKE THE TIME TO GO INTO NOW. AS I CHECKED THE PASSAGE, I WAS REMINDED THAT THIS WAS MY IMPRESSION WHEN I FIRST READ IT, AS IT WAS IN A NUMBER OF OTHER PASSAGES DEALING WITH PHYSICAL, AND ESPECIALLY, PHOTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE. I DIDN'T WRITE YOU A DETAILED CRITIQUE OF ALL OF THESE AT THE TIME BECAUSE I FELT IN THE TOTAL CONTEXT OF YOUR EXCELLENT GENERAL BOOK, THEY WERE RELATIVELY UNIMPORTANT. IN A BOOK SUCH AS THOMPSON'S, FOCUSING SPECIFICALLY ON SUCH EVIDENCE, THEY ARE FAR MORE SERIOUS. AS YOU KNOW, I DID COMMENT NEGATIVELY ON TWO POINTS, IN MY LETTER TO YOU OF NOVEMBER 3: YOUR FAILURE TO TAKE NOTE OF THE STRONG EVIDENCE THAT THE TAGUE CHIP HAD BEEN TRANSFORMED--LITERALLY AND FIGURATIVELY--INTO A MARK; AND YOUR FAILURE TO INDICATE THAT THERE IS CONSIDERABLE PHOTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE INDICATING A JFK HIT AT 189-190 (IN REGARD TO THE LATTER, IT WOULD HAVE ALSO BEEN IMPORTANT TO INCLUDE MENTION OF LILLIAN CASTELLANO'S ABSOLUTE PROOF THAT WILLIS #5 CORRESPONDS TO ZAPRUDER 202, AND NOT 210, AS THE COMMISSION SAYS. THOMPSON ALSO IGNORES THIS PROOF; IN HIS CASE UNDOUBTEDLY BECAUSE IT WOULD UNDERMINE HIS ENTIRE SHOT RECONSTRUCTION.)

EVEN IF YOU DIDN'T FEEL QUALIFIED TO PASS JUDGMENT ON THIS EVIDENCE, WHICH WAS KNOWN TO YOU, I FEEL YOU SHOULD HAVE MENTIONED IT IN LIGHT OF THE FACT YOU DID FEEL QUALIFIED TO SAY ". . . NEITHER THE FILM NOR THE COLOR SLIDES MADE FOR THE COMMISSION BY THE LIFE MAGAZINE PHOTO LABORATORY. . . ENABLE THE VIEWER TO PINPOINT THIS MOVEMENT (WHEN JFK WAS FIRST HIT--RM) L--"ACCESSORIES"; PG 27.

(DESPITE THE ABOVE, I STILL BELIEVE TODAY WHAT I TOLD YOU AT THE TIME; THAT "ACCESSORIES AFTER THE FACT" IS EASILY THE FINEST SINGLE BOOK ON THE ASSASSINATION YET PUBLISHED.)

I FOUND A MOMENT OF NEEDED COMIC RELIEF IN YOUR STATEMENT TO THOMPSON:

"IF ANY OF THIS IS HELPFUL, GOOD! BUT I HAVE THE FATALISTIC FEAR THAT IN THE END I WILL MERELY HAVE SUCCEEDED IN OFFENDING AND ALIENATING BOTH PARTIES TO THIS 'DISPUTE'."

IF TINK IS ANYTHING LESS THAN DELIGHTED WITH YOUR LETTER THEN, TO THE CHARGES THAT I HAVE LEVELED AGAINST HIM, YOU SHOULD ADD ONE OF YOUR OWN--THAT HE IS A MOST UNGRATEFUL PERSON.

I, OF COURSE, UNDERSTAND AT LEAST ONE OF THE DIFFICULTIES FOR YOU IN THIS ENTIRE UNPLEASANT MATTER: YOU ARE CLOSELY CONNECTED WITH THOMPSON'S BOOK, HAVING READ THE MS AS A VOLUNTARY PROFESSIONAL ASSIGNMENT, AND HAVING DONE THE INDEX. IF ANY OF MY CHARGES AGAINST THOMPSON ARE TRUE; WHETHER PLAGIARISM, FAILURE TO ADEQUATELY CREDIT OR ACKNOWLEDGE EARLIER FINDS, INTELLECTUAL DISHONESTY, OR AN AGENCY ROLE; IT MUST INEVITABLY REFLECT, TO SOME EXTENT, ON YOU. FOR EXAMPLE, YOU WERE FAMILIAR WITH MY WORK, COPIES OF ALL OF IT WERE IN YOUR FILES (I'M SURE I'M CORRECT IN ASSUMING THAT YOU HADN'T THROWN IT OUT). THIS INCLUDED ALL MY ZAPRUDER HYPOTHESES, WITH ACCOMPANYING PHOTO-PANELS AND NOTES, "THE BASTARD BULLET", MY CHIP/MARK WORKUP, ETC. I WOULD NOT HAVE EXPECTED THAT YOU COULD POSSIBLY HAVE RETAINED THIS ALL IN YOUR MIND, BUT I CERTAINLY WOULD HAVE EXPECTED THAT YOU WOULD HAVE CHECKED PERTINENT POINTS OF IT WHEN READING CORRESPONDING SECTIONS OF THOMPSON'S MS. (THOMPSON SAYS IN HIS LETTER TO ME OF DECEMBER 15 THAT ONE OF HIS PURPOSES IN

HAVING YOU READ IT WAS TO GET YOUR VIEWS ON QUESTIONS OF ATTRIBUTION, AND THAT WHILE "SHE SUGGESTED SOME CHANGES WITH RESPECT TO EPSTEIN (SHE) FELT--AND STILL DOES, SHE TELLS ME--THAT ALL OTHER ATTRIBUTIONS WERE CORRECT."¹¹ THE DECEMBER 15 DATING OF THOMPSON'S LETTER CLEARLY INDICATES THAT YOU TOLD HIM YOU FELT "ALL OTHER ATTRIBUTIONS WERE CORRECT"¹¹ BEFORE YOU RECEIVED A COPY OF MY 23-PAGER TO TINK OF DECEMBER 15, FOR NONE WERE MAILED BEFORE DECEMBER 18. IT IS QUITE OBVIOUS, THEN, THAT YOU NEVER DID CHECK, OR THAT YOU NEVER DID POINT OUT TO THOMPSON (IGNORING THE FACT THAT HE REALLY DIDN'T NEED SUCH POINTING OUT) THAT SOME OF HIS KEY FORMULATIONS PREVIOUSLY APPEARED IN MY WORK.

ANOTHER SPECIFIC EXAMPLE OF YOUR LAPSE IN THIS REGARD IS THE DOUBLE HEAD-HIT. YOU ADMIT IN YOUR LETTER TO ME OF DECEMBER 1, '67 THAT UNTIL YOU READ TINK'S LETTER TO ME OF NOVEMBER 27 YOU WERE UNAWARE THAT HE HAD DISCOVERED IT INDEPENDENTLY. THIS CAN ONLY MEAN YOU HAD PREVIOUSLY BELIEVED THE ORIGINAL DISCOVERY WAS SOMEONE ELSE'S. ALTHOUGH I KNOW I HAD DISCUSSED IT WITH YOU, I GRANT YOU COULD HAVE EASILY FORGOTTEN IT WAS MINE; BUT IN VIEW OF YOUR KNOWLEDGE THAT MUCH OF MY WORK WAS BASED ON THE ZAPRUDER FILM, HOW IS IT THAT YOU EVIDENTLY NEVER TROUBLED TO CHECK? OR TO CONTACT ME ON THIS OR ANY OTHER ASPECT OF THE BOOK? SINCE HIS BOOK WAS BASED ON PHOTO EVIDENCE, WITH WHICH YOU HAVE ACKNOWLEDGED YOU ARE NOT VERY FAMILIAR, I WOULD HAVE THOUGHT YOU WOULD WANT TO DO THIS TO CHECK SOME OF HIS THESES; COMPLETELY APART FROM ANY QUESTIONS OF CREDIT. IF, ON THE OTHER HAND, YOU WERE CHECKING HIS BOOK NEITHER FOR ACCURACY OF CONTENT (WHICH IN THIS CASE WOULD NECESSITATE REAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE PHOTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE), NOR FOR PROPER ACCREDITATION, WHAT IS LEFT--SPELLING ERRORS?

COMPARING YOUR PERFORMANCE HERE WITH YOUR READING OF MY MS, I RECALL THAT YOU CORRECTLY POINTED OUT THAT I HAD FAILED TO CREDIT EPSTEIN ALTHOUGH USING HIS QUOTE OF REDLICH, "TO SAY THEY WERE HIT BY SEPARATE BULLETS IS SYNONYMOUS WITH SAYING THERE WERE TWO ASSASSINS"¹¹. THAT WAS THE TIME WHEN EPSTEIN'S COWARDLY OBEISANCE TO THE ESTABLISHMENT WAS ALREADY PLAIN FOR ALL TO SEE, AND I ADMIT HAVING BEEN SO ANGRY WITH HIM THAT I HAD DELIBERATELY OMITTED THE CREDIT.

YOUR ADVICE THAT I INCLUDE IT WAS, OF COURSE, PROPER, AND APPRECIATED; AND I THEN DID SO IN THE REALIZATION THAT EVEN SUCH COWARDICE DOES NOT INVALIDATE THE NECESSITY TO PROPERLY CREDIT SOURCES. PERHAPS YOUR TOTAL FAILURE TO ASK THOMPSON TO ACT ACCORDINGLY IN REGARD TO ME FALLS INTO THE CATEGORY OF WHAT YOU HAVE DESCRIBED, ALBEIT IN A SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT CONTEXT, AS "¹¹. . . LEANING OVER BACKWARDS TO BE FAIR TO TINK."¹¹

A FINAL WORD ON THE CREDIT QUESTION WHICH APPLIES, I THINK, TO ALL SUCH CASES, NO MATTER WHO THE PARTIES ARE. ONE WHO CLAIMS TO HAVE BEEN SINCERELY UNAWARE OF SOMEONE ELSE'S PRIOR DEVELOPMENT AND/OR PUBLICATION OF A SIGNIFICANT POINT CAN AT LEAST PARTIALLY DEMONSTRATE HIS SINCERITY BY SHOWING HE IS WILLING TO CORRECT THE OVERSIGHT (EVEN IF IT IS NO MORE THAN THAT) IN FUTURE EDITIONS OR WRITINGS. I STRESS THAT I STATE THIS AS AN OBVIOUSLY VALID PRINCIPLE, AND NOT (BY THIS TIME) WITH ANY DESIRE THAT THOMPSON ACT ACCORDINGLY. MY SUSPICION OF HIS ACTUAL ROLE MAKES ANY SUCH POSSIBLE AMENDS ON HIS PART--SUCH AS HIS LETTER TO THE SATÉVEPOST--A MATTER OF INDIFFERENCE TO ME.

REGARDING MY SUSPICION THAT HIS BOOK REPRESENTS THE WORK OF AN AGENT, IT IS CLEARLY POINTLESS DISCUSSING THAT IN DETAIL WITH YOU IN YOUR PRESENT FRAME OF MIND. YOUR SHOCKED REACTION IN YOUR LETTER TO ME OF DECEMBER 26 IN WHICH, WHILE KNOWING VIRTUALLY NOTHING OF THE EVIDENCE UPON WHICH MY SUSPICION WAS BASED-- (AS YOU STILL DO NOT)--YOU NEVERTHELESS APPEALED TO ME TO RECONSIDER MY CONCLUSIONS, GAVE AMPLE INDICATION THAT YOU CANNOT EXAMINE THIS MATTER RATIONALLY AT PRESENT. AT SOME FUTURE TIME, PERHAPS, BUT CERTAINLY NOT NOW. INTERESTINGLY ENOUGH YOU YOURSELF ARE NOT REALLY COMFORTABLE WITH THOMPSON. YOU UNMISTAKABLY INDICATED THIS IN YOUR NOTE OF DECEMBER 5 '67: "I HOPE MY 2-PAGE LETTER RE TINK (OF DEC 1--RM) WAS NOT MORE OF A 'DEFENSE BRIEF' THAN I REALLY INTENDED. TO BE FRANK, I HAVE NOT REALLY GOTTEN THE 'FEEL' OF HIM, AS A PERSON, AND I DO HAVE OCCASIONALLY UNEASY FEELINGS ABOUT HIM. BUT I'VE TRIED NOT TO BE HYPER-CRITICAL

OR EXCESSIVELY SUSPICIOUS. . ." (EMPHASIS ADDED).

I WILL ONLY ADD THAT THE EVIDENCE OF DECEPTION IN TINK'S WORK; ARTICLE, LETTERS, AND ESPECIALLY HIS BOOK; IS MASSIVE; AND THAT THE TERM YOU USE, "NIT PICKING", AS AN IMPLIED CHARACTERIZATION OF MY EFFORTS TO REVEAL THE FACTS, IS A TOTAL MISREADING BOTH OF MY MOTIVES AND OF HIS WORK. ALL THAT IS REQUIRED TO BE CONVINCED OF THIS IS TO BE EDUCATED, OR EDUCABLE, IN THE PHOTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE; AND TO HAVE AN OPEN MIND. IT IS MY READING OF THIS EVIDENCE, AND HIS ALMOST EXQUISITELY MACHIVELLIAN PHRASEOLOGY, TOGETHER WITH CONSIDERATION OF EXTERNAL CIRCUMSTANCES, THAT LEAD ME TO BELIEVE HIS BOOK IS AN AGENT'S WORK. ON THE OTHER HAND, WERE I TO KNOW TO A CERTAINTY THAT HE WAS NOT AN AGENT, THEN IT WOULD STILL BE NECESSARY TO ANSWER THE QUESTION; WHAT OTHER MOTIVE COULD HE HAVE FOR SUCH GROSS AND UNMISTAKABLY DEMONSTRABLE DISHONESTY?

I NOW WANT TO ADDRESS MYSELF TO AN AREA WHICH YOU NEVER FAIL TO BRING UP --THE GARRISON CASE. IN THE PAST I HAVE TRIED TO TREAT THIS ISSUE OF PROFOUND CONTENTION BETWEEN US AS IF IT WAS A CASE OF HONEST INTELLECTUAL DIFFERENCE. THIS WAS SO EVEN THOUGH I HAVE LONG FELT YOUR OPPOSITION AND DEEP ANIMOSITY TOWARDS HIM WAS BASED ON EMOTIONAL AND OTHER PERSONAL FACTORS, IN ADDITION TO SOMETIMES VALID INTELLECTUAL ARGUMENTS. I TRIED TO KEEP IT THAT WAY IN THE HOPE YOU WOULD BEGIN TO SEE YOUR BASIC POSITION OF ATTACK WAS WRONG (WHICH IS CERTAINLY NOT TO SAY THAT ONE IS OBLIGED TO ENDORSE ANY OR ALL OF GARRISON'S SPECIFIC MOVES, BUT MERELY TO NOTE THAT NO FINAL JUDGMENTS COULD BE VALID UNTIL THE CASE WAS PRESENTED AND TESTED IN COURT.)

THIS HOPE RECEIVED SOME ENCOURAGEMENT IN OUR LAST PHONE CONVERSATION, LATE IN NOVEMBER, WHEN YOU AGREED THAT THE TRIAL OF CLAY SHAW SHOULD NOW GO FORWARD (UNLESS LEGALLY AND LEGITIMATELY HALTED) WITHOUT ATTEMPTS TO PREJUDICE THE CASE FROM ANY QUARTER. I POINTED OUT TO YOU THAT ONE WOULD NOT KNOW FROM YOUR WRITTEN AND SPOKEN STATEMENTS THAT THIS WAS YOUR FEELING, AND SUGGESTED THAT YOU MAKE IT CLEARLY AND PUBLICLY UNDERSTOOD. YOU AGREED THAT YOU WOULD DO THIS AT THE EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY, WHILE EXPRESSING WONDERMENT HOW ANYONE COULD HAVE MIS-INTERPRETED YOUR STATEMENTS AS INDICATING OPPOSITION TO AN UN-PREJUDICED TRIAL.

BUT INSTEAD, THE INCREASING VEHEMENCE AND PROLIFERATION OF YOUR ATTACKS ON HIM, AND ON THOSE WHO ARE IN GENERAL DISAGREEMENT WITH YOU ON THIS; AS WELL AS THE INCREASING TENSION DUE TO RECENT LEGAL DEVELOPMENTS AND THE APPROACHING TRIAL, MAKE ME FEEL OBLIGED TO ADDRESS THIS QUESTION MORE FRANKLY.

YOU HAVE LIED--THERE IS SIMPLY NO OTHER WAY TO HONESTLY PUT IT--LIED DELIBERATELY AND PERSISTENTLY ABOUT THE POSITION OF A NUMBER OF YOUR COLLEAGUES IN THIS MATTER (I AM CERTAIN WHAT I HAVE SAID APPLIES TO MAGGIE AND ME; I BELIEVE IT ALSO APPLIES TO A NUMBER OF THE OTHERS). DESPITE REPEATED AND NUMEROUS EXPLANATIONS TO YOU OF WHAT MY POSITION--AND MAGGIE'S--HAS CONSISTENTLY BEEN SINCE MY TRIP TO NEW ORLEANS LAST MAY, A POSITION WHICH WAS THEN AND REMAINS NOW ONE OF OPPOSING AND EXPOSING ALL ATTEMPTS TO PREJUDICE THE OUTCOME OF THE TRIAL, AND RESERVING JUDGMENT TILL THEN, YOU HAVE INSISTED ON IGNORING THIS, AND HAVE PREFERRED INSTEAD TO DO BATTLE WITH STRAWMEN--ONES WHICH YOU ERECTED YOURSELF AND WHICH YOU HAVE ALTERNATELY AND/OR SIMULTANEOUSLY CALLED "GARRISON IDOLATORS"; "GARRISON ADMIRERS"; "GARRISON WORSHIPPERS"; AND "GARRISON CLACQUE".

I RECOGNIZE THAT IT IS MUCH EASIER, DEBATING-WISE, TO ATTACK SUCH PUNY FOES-- AFTER ALL, WHO CAN RESPECT ANYBODY'S IDOLATOR OR CLACQUE?--THAN IT WOULD BE TO ARGUE AGAINST THEIR POSITION OF OPPOSING ATTEMPTS TO PREJUDICE THE LEGAL PROCEEDINGS; BUT YOUR DELIBERATE MISREPRESENTATION OF YOUR OPPONENTS' POSITION IS SO DISHONEST THAT, DEBATING POINT OR NO, IT INDEED JUSTIFIES THE DESCRIPTION -- LIE.

WHAT YOUR MOTIVES ARE FOR THIS SLATANT DISHONESTY ONLY YOU CAN KNOW FOR SURE (IF INDEED, EVEN YOU KNOW), WHILE THOSE YOU SO CHARACTERIZE CAN ONLY WINCE, WONDER,

AND GUESS.

THE BASIC DISHONESTY OF YOUR POSITION IS ALSO REVEALED BY THE SELECTIVE QUALITY OF YOUR MORAL AND INTELLECTUAL EYESIGHT. MAJOR MEDIA AND THEIR LACKEYS MAY ENGAGE IN THE MOST OUTRAGEOUS AND UNPRECEDENTED ATTEMPTS TO SUBVERT GARRISON'S CASE; YOU SAY NOTHING. TOP OFFICIALS OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT MAY THREATEN TO ARREST GARRISON; YOU SAY NOTHING. GOVERNORS OF SEVERAL STATES TO DATE UNANIMOUSLY REFUSE TO EXTRADITE WITNESSES; YOU SAY NOTHING. SEVENTEEN-YEAR OLD ARMY MEDICAL RECORDS ARE LEAKED AT THE OBVIOUS DIRECTION OF THE PRESIDENT; YOU SAY NOTHING. BUT LET GARRISON MAKE A STATEMENT WHICH IS, OR EVEN MAY BE, INCORRECT OR DOUBTFUL (OR, MORE OFTEN, WHOSE ACCURACY CAN NOT YET BE KNOWN BY THE PUBLIC OR YOU) AND A MIGHTY BLAST IS CERTAIN TO FOLLOW IMMEDIATELY FROM THAT MORAL TOWER ON 12TH STREET; DIRECTED INVARIABLY NOT ONLY AT GARRISON, BUT AT ALL WHO DO NOT JOIN IN YOUR SELF-RIGHTEOUS (THOUGH TUNNEL-VISIONED) OUTRAGE.

GARRISON HIMSELF, POOR FELLOW, IS DAMNED IF HE DOES AND DAMNED IF HE DOESN'T. GARRISON DOES NOT REVEAL HIS EVIDENCE--WHATEVER IT MAY BE--TO THE PUBLIC OR TO SYLVIA MEAGHER; CRIES OF IMPATIENT FURY ARE FORTHCOMING, "WHERE IS HIS EVIDENCE?". SHOULD HE BE FOOLISH ENOUGH TO REVEAL HIS EVIDENCE PRIOR TO TRIAL (A TRIAL WHICH YOU CHOOSE TO IGNORE HAS NOW BEEN DELAYED FOR SEVERAL MONTHS BY THE DEFENSE), AND THUS LAY THE BASIS FOR A VALID MOVE FOR DISMISSAL, I AM SURE YOU WOULD NEVERTHELESS ATTACK HIM FOR ATTEMPTING TO CONVICT SHAW OUT OF COURT. I AM NOT PRIVY TO HIS EVIDENCE; NOR, TO MY KNOWLEDGE, ARE MOST OF THE CRITICS. IF YOU ARE, PERHAPS YOU HAVE A BASIS FOR YOUR TOTALLY NEGATIVE ATTITUDE, BUT YOU SHOULD NOT USE THIS PRIVILEGED AND UNREVEALED INFORMATION AS A BASIS FOR EXCORIATING YOUR LESS ENLIGHTENED COLLEAGUES (OR IF YOU PREFER, FORMER COLLEAGUES).

TO INSIST ON FAIRPLAY IN THE LEGAL PROCEEDINGS FOR ONE AND ALL ACCUSED IS ADMIRABLE, BUT YOUR NEWLY ADOPTED ADDED ROLE OF DEFENDER OF THE ESTABLISHMENT, THE CIA, AND THE FBI, FROM GARRISON'S CHARGES OF COMPLICITY AND COVERUP, IS AS DISTURBING AS IT IS UNBECOMING.

IF GARRISON IS A KNAVE, A FOOL, AND A CHARLATAN, AS YOU SAY, THE BEST WAY TO EXPOSE HIM IS IN COURT. (I HAVE THE FEELING THAT IF THAT'S WHAT HE WAS, HE WOULD HAVE LITTLE OPPOSITION FROM THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, WHO WOULD BE MOST HAPPY TO HAVE HIM REVEALED AS SUCH--AND TO BRING DOWN THE OTHER CRITICS WITH HIM.) BUT BY WHAT REASON OR RIGHT DO YOU LEND YOUR NOW PRESTIGIOUS VOICE TO THE SERVICE OF THOSE WHO ARE DETERMINED TO SUBVERT HIS EFFORTS, A PRIORI? THAT THE OPEN ENEMIES OF TRUTH ARE MOTIVATED BY FEAR OF EXPOSURE, OR EVEN POTENTIAL EXPOSURE; WHILE YOU BELIEVE YOU ARE ON THE SIDE OF TRUTH, DOESN'T ALTER THE FACT THAT, HAVING EXONERATED THE LEGALLY ACCUSED, YOU HAVE ARROGATED UNTO YOURSELF THE RIGHT TO ACCUSE, TRY, AND JUDGE JIM GARRISON--AND ALL THOSE WHO WILL NOT JOIN YOUR KANGAROO COURT.

YOUR ANALOGY WITH THE CRITICS' "TRIAL" OF THE WARREN COMMISSION IS A FLASE ONE. THERE, THE ACCUSED WAS MURDERED, THE "FACTS" FED TO THE PUBLIC WERE, TO PUT IT MILDLY, SUSPECT FROM THE BEGINNING; BUT EVEN SO, WE DID NOT PASS FINAL JUDGMENT ON THE WARREN COMMISSION UNTIL STUDYING ITS CASE. DO YOU STILL HAVE TO BE TOLD THAT GARRISON'S CASE--SUCH AS IT MAY BE--HAS NOT YET BEEN PRESENTED?

AN OUTSTANDING EXAMPLE OF YOUR "DAMN-GARRISON-WHATEVER-HE-DOES" ATTITUDE IS YOUR DISPARAGEMENT, TO AL WYMAN OF KLAC RADIO (L.A.), OF GARRISON'S SUBPOENAEING AS WITNESSES OF HALL, HOWARD, AND SEYMOUR. YOU COMMENTED TO WYMAN THAT YOU HAVE SEEN NO EVIDENCE TO JUSTIFY THIS MOVE. YET ON PG 379 OF "ACCESSORIES" THERE IS RECORDED FOR ALL TO SEE THE FOLLOWING:

"IN ITSELF, THIS SETTING-THE-STAGE (THE ODDIO INCIDENT-RM) MADE IT IMPERATIVE FOR THE COMMISSION TO PRESS THE INVESTIGATION TO THE LIMITS AND TO CONSIDER

LORAN HALL, LAWRENCE HOWARD, AND WILLIAM SEYMOUR AS PRIME SUSPECTS IN THE ASSASSINATION, IF THEY PROVED TO BE THE MEN WHO HAD VISITED MRS. ODIO, UNLESS AN INNOCENT AND INCONTROVERTIBLE EXPLANATION FOR THEIR ANTICS WAS ESTABLISHED."

YOU ATTACK THE WARREN COMMISSION (AND CERTAINLY, WITH REASON) FOR NOT HAVING INTERROGATED THESE THREE, WHOM YOU LABELED "PRIME SUSPECTS IN THE ASSASSINATION". YET, WHEN GARRISON ATTEMPTS TO DO JUST THAT, BY SUBPOENAEING THEM MERELY AS WITNESSES, YOU HAVE THE TEMERITY TO PUBLICLY ATTACK HIM FOR THIS!

WHATEVER MOTIVATES SUCH INCOMPREHENSIBLE AND GROSSLY UNFAIR ACTIONS; WHATEVER VALID AND HONEST REASONS YOU FEEL YOU HAVE FOR YOUR POSITION; THEY CANNOT JUSTIFY THE ARROGANCE, VANITY, AND PETULANT SELF-INDULGENCE WHICH HAVE INCREASINGLY MARKED YOUR BEHAVIOR.

SYLVIA, THIS HAS BEEN THE MOST PAINFUL LETTER I HAVE EVER HAD TO WRITE. I AM SURE IT WILL ALSO BE PAINFUL, PROBABLY MUCH MORE PAINFUL, FOR YOU TO READ. ALTHOUGH THAT IS PROBABLY INEVITABLE, IT CERTAINLY WAS NOT MY DESIRE TO CAUSE YOU ADDED PAIN; AND IF I STILL DID NOT RETAIN CONSIDERABLE FAITH IN YOUR BASIC INTEGRITY AND GOODNESS, ITS DOUBTFUL I WOULD HAVE WRITTEN AT ALL.

I REALIZE I HAVE USED HARSH WORDS, BUT THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN NO POINT IN WRITING IF I WERE TO MASK MY HONEST BELIEFS BEHIND DISHONESTLY SUGARED LANGUAGE. IT IS MY HOPE, PERHAPS, THAT THIS FRANK AND EVEN BRUTAL EXPOSITION OF MY OPINIONS, SUPPORTED AS I BELIEVE THEM TO BE BY THE FACTS, WILL SHOCK YOU INTO A CAREFUL RECONSIDERATION OF THE MATTERS I HAVE COVERED; AND PERHAPS MAKE YOU REALIZE THAT YOUR ACTIONS IN RECENT MONTHS ARE LEADING YOU INTO A POLITICAL, MORAL, AND INTELLECTUAL MORASS.

I IMPLORER YOU TO THINK THIS THROUGH MOST CAREFULLY; PERHAPS AFTER THE INITIAL SHOCK OF MY LANGUAGE HAS SOFTENED. THINK -- WITH YOUR FINE BRAIN, AND PERHAPS WITH A LITTLE HEART; BUT NOT WITH YOUR SPLEEN OR EGO. I KNOW IT WILL TAKE GREAT COURAGE FOR YOU TO EVEN FACE THE POSSIBILITY THAT YOU MAY BE BASICALLY WRONG, AND THAT YOU HAVE BEEN SHAMEFULLY EXPLOITED; BUT I ASK YOU TO DO THIS FOR THE SAKE OF THE TRUTH IN THIS HISTORIC CAUSE, FOR THE SAKE OF YOUR TRUE FRIENDS; BUT MOST OF ALL, FOR YOURSELF.

SINCERELY AND WITH LOVE,



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