

30 July 1967

Dear Shirley,

You probably know by now that the Larrie Schmidt who is involved in the case is not the Larrie Schmidt who died. Vince had called me about a week ago and he told me what he had heard from Penn—that Larrie Schmidt was dead, and that Lovelady was hospitalized with cancer. I called Penn the next day to see what I could learn, because if the information was definite I might still be able to stick a footnote in my book.

Penn called back a few nights ago to say that it was a different Larrie Schmidt; and that he had seen Lovelady, who is now convalescing at home from rectal surgery. As you may know, Sprague and Jones Harris found a film that showed Lovelady in front of the Depository about 15 minutes after the shooting: in this film, he is clearly wearing (not the red and white striped short-sleeved shirt) a long-sleeved, plaid shirt. However, Sprague and Harris feel certain that this shirt does not correspond with the shirt in the doorway—it is red and black (or blue) with a yellow stripe, completely different colors, they say. Now Penn has seen the shirt, and he too feels it cannot be the same one. Be that as it may, I think we have lost ground, now that Lovelady is known to have been wearing a long-sleeved, checked shirt.

Penn had told me when I first called him that it was Garrison (or his office) who had dug up the information on Bogard, Schmidt, and Lovelady. When he called me a few days later to say that it was the wrong Schmidt, I made a crack about it—saying, I might have known it was a mistake since it came from Garrison, or words to that effect. One thing led to another, and Penn and I got into a pretty sharp exchange. He is very sold on Garrison, as you probably know, while I detest the man for being a fraud and a charlatan who is the greatest possible menace to legitimate criticism and honest efforts to get a new investigation. I don't imagine that you share these feelings, although I have the impression that you are not entirely sold on Garrison. In any case, Penn was going down to New Orleans, and I guess I needled him a little too much, and we both got pretty angry and hostile. The next day I wrote him a long, friendly letter, explaining just how I feel about Garrison, and exactly why I regard him as very dangerous and untrustworthy. I hope that Penn will not stay sore, or accuse me (as one of the Garrison admirers has already done) of "joining the pack that is out to get Garrison." Good heavens, do I really have to justify myself to the critics who have been my closest friends for so long? They may not agree with me, but they should certainly realize that I am acting on conscience and conviction. What has always escaped and astonished me is that the critics who have been so brilliant in finding all the weak points in the official case, and so uncompromising in denouncing the lies, perjury, and misrepresentation, can tolerate and try to justify false charges and fabricated evidence just because it is Garrison, instead of the Commission, who is taking liberties with the facts and with the fate of an accused person. What possible meaning can our work have if we are against falsehoods only if they are told by the WC, but condone lies told by our so-called "ally."

I became suspicious of Garrison when he put Russo and Bundy on the stand; and became convinced that he was up to no good when he announced his so-called code "P.O. 19106." He has admitted privately that the code is a mistake but he won't make a public retraction. Have Penn, Ray, and the others forgotten that the code implicates, falsely, Lee Oswald as well as Clay Shaw, in a conspiracy to commit murder? I am astonished and sorrowful that they try to rationalize and justify this dishonesty, and nothing in the world can ever persuade me to agree that the ends justify the means. Because if they do, for Garrison, why don't they for the Commission? or even for the assassins? No, it is only when the means are scrupulous and irreproachable that the ends can have merit. Well, enough of this raving...I did want you to know about Schmidt. Back to the office tomorrow, alas, where I understand the work is piled up in 4-foot stacks. Don't fret if I don't write again very soon. *hr*