

9 November 1972

Mr Gary Schoener  
1080 15th Avenue S.E.  
Minneapolis 55114

Dear Gary,

Your letter of 5 November 1972 is probably the most beautiful and heartening one I have received since I started work on the case almost nine years ago. I would like to think that I actually deserve some measure of the very generous tribute you have given my work.

The case meant everything to me, for a long time. In the beginning, it was a time of commitment, integrity, and cooperation among a small dispersed group of critics, riding high on idealism and mutual support. For me, the emergence of Garrison was a turning point and a beginning to division, rancor, and mutual recrimination among the critics. There occurred a large measure of disintegration among us, with growing internecine warfare that gradually obliterated the case, and the evidence as such, and it became a battlefield for conflicting claims and for the collision of personal considerations and individual hypotheses.

As Jerry has told you, I do indeed wish to avoid any further involvement in the case, partly because I now despair of any hopes for success of all the efforts made by the serious critics and partly because I simply cannot risk any loss of equilibrium. I had a very bad four months, this year and I simply cannot risk any relapse. As you say, there are a number of possible causes or combinations of causes underlying the very dreadful depression which I experienced. I have not found it possible to establish the cause or causes but I do feel certain that I must avoid the tension, anxiety and anger that I have been experiencing increasingly--especially in my contacts with certain of our colleagues.

This is not to say that I will never under any circumstances become interested in the case again. I would like to be active, if I can do useful work that has a real chance of impact. I had expected that my article on Charles Givens would be a lever to open a path into a review of the whole case. But it was ignored and merely provided David Belin with a platform for additional falsehoods and invidious commentary. The Wecht affair was a great disappointment, too--we do not lack for failures!

I am sorry that we have never met. Perhaps we shall do so. In any case, I am very moved by your letter and very grateful for your generosity toward my work. My very best wishes,

Yours sincerely,