

24 April 1967

Dear Gordon,

Your letter of the 22nd coincides with a discouraging story in today's late newspapers about the Garrison investigation. The press story deals with an article by ~~Richard~~ J. Whalen in the Saturday Evening Post of 5/5/67, which appears on the newsstands tomorrow. Whalen's article appears to be very damaging to Garrison, assuming that it is accurate and objective--mainly, in terms of documents given to Whalen by Garrison himself, which indicate that Russo's story of the Ferrie/Shaw/"Oswald" conspiratorial conversation in his (Russo's) presence emerged for the first time while Russo was under hypnotic regression. Even more dismaying, apparently the written report given to Whalen by Garrison strongly suggests that the questions put to Russo while hypnotized and under chemical influence (questions which originated in Garrison's office and were given to the physician in charge, Dr. Fatter) "planted" in Russo's mind the whole story of the Ferrie party, as well as a post-hypnotic suggestion which Whalen seems to believe accounts for Russo's unshakable composure on the witness stand.

Whalen also states that Garrison could not have read the reports he gave to him, or not read them carefully, since they are highly damaging to his main witness, to his case against Shaw, and to his own credibility.

I imagine that some of the critics who are emotionally committed to Garrison will try to dismiss Whalen's story as part of the general attack by "the Establishment" on Garrison. One does not, of course, know the actual facts; but it should be borne in mind that the same Whalen did a story on the same Garrison some years ago, during Garrison's clean-up campaign of the Strip, in which he took a highly laudatory view of Garrison. Nor should one forget Whalen's attack on the WR in the SEP of 1/14/67, accompanied by an editorial demanding reexamination of the WR's disputed findings. These earlier articles make it difficult to brush Whalen off as a tool or agent for the WR apologists.

Whalen, like you, seems to believe that Garrison's staff is composed of a bunch of yes-men now, whereas in their earlier encounter he had a right-hand-man who was more sceptical, independent, and critical, and kept Garrison's impetuosity in check. But a professional investigator whom I know and in whom I have considerable confidence recently visited Garrison's office and spent some time with his main assistants (although he did not see Garrison personally); he came away convinced that the investigation was proceeding on a very high plane of professional competence. That, of course, was very encouraging, at the time.

As I said in my letter of the 17th, I have been afflicted by grave misgivings about Russo and Bundy, and it has caused what might almost be called an estrangement from some of the other critics. They are impatient with my mistrust of the accusers of Shaw, citing the categorical statements by Mark Lane (that Garrison indeed has solved the case and has proof to nail the guilty) as a kind of guarantee of Garrison's solidity. So far as I am concerned, however, the entente between Garrison and Mark Lane only intensifies my uneasiness about Garrison's judgment and expertise (Lane is hardly the most accurate, sound, or scholarly researcher--his forte lies in influencing the public at large to rethink the case and to take account of the defects in evidence). Lane's relative lack of first-hand authoritative knowledge of the published evidence led him to agree with and encourage Garrison, in a taped interview broadcast in California, when he claimed that a particular document had been suppressed. It was, in fact, published in Volume XVI; and I wrote Lane with copy to Garrison in a very friendly spirit pointing that out. Garrison, apparently pricked by the implication that he was in error, wrote back to me at once, explaining the basis of his charge of suppression. This was the first time that I had any

direct communication from him, although I had sent him information and relevant excerpts from my forthcoming book quite frequently. Indeed, he had understandable grounds for his allegation of suppression of the document in question—I would not blame anyone for making the assumption he made, but anyone who knows the documentation intimately (as Lane does not) would at least have entered a caveat, not concurred in what I am certain was a baseless charge. What Garrison and Lane do not realize is that the inefficiency and unfamiliarity of the federal agencies with the published evidence is so great that they sometimes list as "classified" or "secret" or even "top secret" documents that have been in the public domain since late 1964.

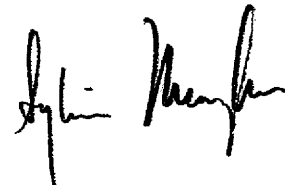
In any case, Garrison's letter was pleasant and witty; and he wrote a postscript by hand which was really quite generous, about my index and about the various data I had been sending to his office. Certainly I was pleased and appreciative; but I hope that I have enough perspective to separate a disarming, even impressive personality from the quite separate question of evidence and the credibility of witnesses.

You are entirely correct in dismissing as ridiculous the allegations of Stanley Ross about Gongora. Ross is an ex-Trujillo agent and now a spokesman for the anti-Castro Cuban colony here. He is no more capable of objective investigation or impartial evaluation of evidence that I am capable of dancing Swan Lake with Nureyev tomorrow night. His attempt to convert poor deranged Gongora into a Castro agent and/or assassin is contemptible and ludicrous. If you have not seen it already, read about Gongora in CE 1444. I think you will agree that the whole thesis put forward by Ross is irresponsible, mischievous, and dangerous; and could be published only in a foul rag like the National Enquirer. (Confidentially, an English-woman who works for the N.E. has been calling me frequently for information on the 26 volumes and the like; she is a very decent soul but has no control whatever over the obscene and untrustworthy material published in the paper; and she has been honorable enough to warn me several times to be on guard even as to factual assertions in its columns.)

If Garrison is convinced that "Leon Oswald" was really L.H. Oswald, and that the real Oswald was present at the Ferrie party, I can only infer that his familiarity with the evidence is inadequate—and I don't mean the mere claims in the WR but the actual strong evidence that Oswald left New Orleans never to return on about 9/24/63 or 9/25/63. Moreover, the Oswald described by Russo (and there seems less reason than ever to believe Russo) is all but irreconcilable in manner and personality with the real Oswald, as he emerges from a variety of testimony, writings, etc. Yet I retain considerable admiration for Garrison, and some hope that despite various tactical and factual errors (not to say disasters) he will still come out on top, somehow. A man who unhesitatingly terms Liebler a fool, for broadcast, can't be all bad! Must be, in fact, richly endowed with courage, scepticism, and brains. We must hope that he can also pull rabbits out of hats.

Do call me by my first name, Gordon, or I should be obliged to begin to address you formally all over again. I should be glad to know your reaction (and/or Matt Herron's) to the Whalen article, which you will perhaps see even before this letter. All the best,

Very sincerely yours,



P.S. It is probably unnecessary to say so, but please regard this letter in its entirety as confidential.