

Mr. Gordon R. Pollard  
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Medicine Hat, Alberta

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Dear Gordon,

Thank you very much indeed for your special delivery express letter of the 10th and the enclosed photocopy of the article in the Vancouver Sun. I find it difficult to evaluate Donald Norton's story. Anyone can claim to have worked for the CIA, and a surprising number of people do. And, like Norton, most of them seem to be "floaters" who do not have roots of any long-term nature, sustained relationships with family or friends or in employment. Usually there is some history of borderline activities, whether criminal or personal deviation and instability. There is nothing in their stories which make them inherently implausible or impossible; nor anything that is susceptible of definite corroboration or proof. My general impression is that the very fact of the Garrison investigation has excited many rootless individuals and some pathological liars, who want to become a part of the story, whether for venal or emotional reasons. On balance, I would regard Norton's story with considerable reserve.

My doubts about Garrison have become progressively greater, and after the so-called cryptogram of Ruby's unpublished telephone number and subsequent "decodings" which Garrison explained to me personally by telephone I lost the last remnants of confidence in him. This has inevitably affected and even poisoned my relationships with the other critics, those with whom I have had the closest collaboration and warmest friendship, who have remained utterly committed to Garrison's cause, and who have summoned up rationalizations to explain away and justify every embarrassment, from the "code" to the defection of William Gurvich.

Recently, one of the critics who had become one of my closest friends and who seemed to be mesmerized by Garrison, to the point of unreason, made the pilgrimage to New Orleans. He spent a week there, with carte blanche to look at all the files, etc. When he returned, he refused to discuss his impressions of Garrison's evidence and the case against Shaw; the most I could drag out of him was that he was "not happy;" but under further pressure, the next day, he admitted that he was "not encouraged and even dismayed" by the "evidence." And pessimistic about the Shaw trial, if and when it is held. However, in spite of his dismay with respect to the evidence, his devotion to Garrison is stronger than ever, after his visit. The man must have formidable charm and plausibility--no one seems to be immune, even the most level-headed people. I am distressed and disgusted by the double standard by which the critics view Garrison's "evidence" and his witnesses, as opposed to the truly scrupulous methodology of the same critics' attack on the Warren Commission "evidence." They seem not to realize or care that Garrison's failure and disgrace (which seems to me inevitable) will deal a terrible blow to authentic criticism of the Warren Report and compromise those of the critics who have openly allied themselves with Garrison.

A few days ago I finished work on the page proofs of my book; it will be only another two or three months now before copies will be in the book shops. At about the same time or perhaps a bit later, a book by Professor Thompson will be out--a microstudy of the assassination (shots, trajectories, wounds, ballistics, etc.). I have had a look at the manuscript and was very favorably impressed: I think it is a forceful and very well argued case for three assassins, and with any luck (and if Garrison would only quiet down for a while) it should make a powerful impact. All the best,

Sylvia Meagher