

10 September 1967

Mr. James Phelan
143 Tivoli Drive
Long Beach, Calif.

Dear Mr. Phelan,

Thank you for your nice letter of the 5th and for returning the two articles. I am sorry that I could not provide you with copies to keep.

Yes, I did see the September Ramparts and Bill Turner's article (as well as his earlier piece on Garrison). I've met Bill, only once, and liked him very much indeed. However, I do not share his romantic view of the New Orleans district attorney, as I do not agree with the majority of the critics (including those who have been my most valued colleagues and friends) on the issue of Garrison. By now you will have seen the latest apologia for him, by Professor Richard Popkin; perhaps you will be interested to read my letter to the editors of the New York Review of Books on Popkin's article, copy of which is enclosed.


I think that journalism merits severe criticism for its complacent and irresponsible embrace of the Warren Report, and for its long effort to influence the public to accept this infamous fraud. However, I don't think that the profession merits criticism for disinterested reporting of the Garrison affair, when it has been disinterested, even if the results are displeasing to his admirers. I had the impression that your article in the SEP was disinterested (although I did not regard the NBC program as such). I think it is particularly unfortunate that the shoddy events in New Orleans have served to divert attention from the central issue of the fraudulence of the Warren Report, and from legitimate criticism of the official findings.

Some of the critics, I have to admit, have utilized tactics from which I disassociate myself completely, and which I greatly regret. (Interestingly enough, they are the very critics who are now among Garrison's most ardent supporters, although I do not include here either Popkin or Turner.) Greatly as I deplore those failings of my colleagues among the critics, they are almost always attacked not because of the inherent unworthiness of their actions or statements but because they are disavowers of the Warren Report. Those who have never taken the trouble to study the Report or to speak out on its numerous and appalling defects are all too ready to attack the critics, whether on real or malicious grounds. This serves to convince me, more than ever, that the individual's commitment should be solely to the truth and the facts, whatever they happen to be and wherever they happen to lead, and not to personalities or to "causes". This position, to my sorrow, has proven to be almost as intolerable to my colleagues as to my adversaries.

I will be happy to see you when you are in New York again. I think that my book will be arriving from the printer at just about that time, but I hope that it will not scramble my schedule too badly. My number at my office, should you wish to reach me during the day, is Plaza 4-1234, ext. 2024.

With kind regards,

Yours faithfully,


Sylvia Meagher
302 West 12 Street
New York City 10014