

30 December 1968

Mr. Paris Flammonde
285 West 12 Street
New York, N.Y. 10014

Dear Paris,

A review copy of The Kennedy Conspiracy was waiting for me when I returned from work three hours ago. Congratulations on the handsome design and the attributes of scholarship which are apparent from a cursory glance at the contents and the footnoting. I was so eager to dip into the book at once that I found myself pouring No-Cal into an ashtray instead of a glass. Notwithstanding the error, I have now managed a quick first reading of chapter 12, The Criticism, which of course was of special personal interest, and have scanned other pages which the index suggested were of particular significance.

I am therefore able, without delay, to thank you for your very generous remarks about me and your references to my work. I do indeed appreciate your comments. And I send you my sincere good wishes for success. I must also explain the somewhat melancholy circumstances in which I find myself, in terms of preparing a review.

When I suggested that I should like a review copy of the book, I had in mind to write a critique for publication in The Minority of One, which has always been most generous in presenting my work on the assassinations. In the intervening time, TMO has suddenly and most unfortunately been forced to suspend publication permanently, because of the usual financial difficulties. I did know that there were problems, as there have been every year, but I had no idea until a few short weeks ago that TMO could not be salvaged. It is quite a blow, personally and professionally, as I have little or no prospect of placing articles and reviews elsewhere. I am now trying to place a review of Lifton's Document Appendix, also prepared for TMO; if I have any luck, I will be encouraged vis a vis The Kennedy Conspiracy. I have sketched the circumstances in some detail to avoid any misunderstanding—as to my good faith in asking for a review copy, or as to my reaction upon reading the book judged by the non-appearance of a review.

Since I am on the subject of TMO, I might as well comment on your discussion of the editorial ("Garrison and Warren: Anything in Common?"), page 327 of your book. The identity (and gender) of the author of the editorial is indicated on the masthead—it states that all unsigned articles are written by the editor, M.S. Arnoni. Garrison also used the phrase "his (or her)" in his letter responding to the editorial; no doubt he intended the phrase to signify his uncertainty as to whether Arnoni himself, or I, had written the offensive commentary. Unfortunately, in his haste, he inserted the phrase in the wrong line, so that (to my amusement) it had the effect of questioning the masculinity of Mr. Gurvich. As to your comment that three judges deemed the testimonies of Russo and Bundy as "solid" (rather than unreliable), it is my understanding that the judicial finding that a trial should be held was wholly without reference to their credibility or lack of credibility—the decision merely declared that the testimonies of the two witnesses and any other evidence should be subject to judgment by means of the usual legal process.

On page 114, your use of an excerpt from Accessories (page 377) may be a little misleading. The passage you quote was my paraphrase of what the Commission said in its Report, on pages 321-324, and not a statement of my own views, as may be inferred. On the contrary, I do not accept the Commission's assumptions, constraints, or "facts," as indicated on pages 381-382 of Accessories, in which I specifically reject each of the Commission's assertions about dates and times and its conclusion about air travel as the sole means of bringing Oswald to Mrs. Odio's door at the crucial time.

It may be helpful if I point out a few typographical errors which I noticed in scanning the index, which should be corrected before a second printing. "Gerici" should be "Geraci." "Lechunga" should be "Lechuga" and "Martell" should be "Martello." On page 334, "Marks, Stalley" should be "Marks, Stanley."

I was glad that you did not commit yourself to a definite judgment in Garrison's favor, in your closing remarks on pages 331-332, and I very much hope that the book in its totality will prove that you achieved the objectivity you aimed for and the impartiality that is indispensable to this kind of study. That is all the more desirable in view of the developments in very recent days, which suggest a serious and perhaps fatal disarray within the Garrison camp. The firing of Boxley has been made public; but I hear also that Bill Turner has been accused of collusion with Boxley and has been placed under suspicion as a so-called government agent, and that Steve Jaffe has suffered the same fate. I hear also that Lane has split with Mort Sahl and/or Garrison. (I am not vouching for any of this, from personal knowledge, but I find the information issuing from several sources which have always been reliable in the past.) If Garrison has really been clutching "agents" to his bosom, as he himself seemingly admits in his denunciations of Gurvich and now Boxley, it raises most serious questions about his judgment of men and of evidence; if the "agents" are innocent, then questions arise about Garrison's propensity for making public charges which are both false and damaging to the victims, and which inevitably cast discredit and ridicule on the entire attack, from all sources, on the Warren Report.

Certainly you are correct in characterizing certain of the attacks on Garrison as vicious, irresponsible, false, and Establishment-tainted (NBC, Aynesworth, Sheridan, and Goodhart). But if all or most of the attack on Garrison has taken the form of vilification, isn't that because those who bore the moral obligation to assess and criticize him with strict impartiality, especially because he appeared to share and endorse their position--that is, the main critics of the WR (Lane, Weisberg, Salandria, Penn Jones, Harris, Marcus, Popkin, Turner, etc.)--defaulted on that obligation? Had Garrison accused pro-Castro Cubans instead of anti-Castroites, SDS instead of JBS, on the basis of the same evidence and the same witnesses, you may be sure that he would have been crushed and dismembered by the acid scorn of those very same critics (though perhaps treated with more respect and kindness by NBC, Aynesworth, and their ilk). I am not merely postulating this, but have a very definite basis for my assumption, in terms of specific critics and specific incidents in February/March 1967, before Garrison's targets were clearly known.

I have gone on at far, far greater length than I intended, and I will use what remains of the evening to get down to the pleasure of reading the book systematically and in sequence. Again, my congratulations and thanks,

Sincerely yours,

Sylvia Meagher