

5 February 1969

Mr. Harold Weisberg  
Route 8, Frederick 21701

Dear Harold,

Thank you for your letter of 2/2/69 and the copies of your three letters of 2/3/69 to Bud Fensterwald, Louis Ivon, and Vince Salandria. I hope that I understand correctly the sequence of events and the present situation. As it appears to me, on Monday 1/27/69 all parties concerned reached agreement that the court action to obtain release of the autopsy photos and X-rays should proceed with vigor. Bud Fensterwald subsequently filed a brief, on 1/31/69, in support of the contention that there were shots from more than one direction. At that juncture, Judge Halleck gave the New Orleans District Attorney until Wednesday (today) to state explicitly that the autopsy photos were material and relevant to the trial of Clay Shaw.

You felt, when we spoke on Friday night 1/31/69, that Garrison would comply with Halleck's order, while I expressed apprehension and pessimism on the ground that Garrison had shown himself to be completely unprincipled and unreliable. I said that he was quite capable of bringing the entire critics' effort into disaster by defaulting on his responsibility to follow through on the release of the autopsy photos which he himself had set into motion. I reiterated what I had been saying since the four-man panel report was made public--that such a default would constitute a gift and a triumph for the Warren Commission, the autopsy surgeons, and the panel, since a clear and damning case could easily be made against all these parties.

It was my determination to do everything possible to prevent such a triumph for the Warren Commission and the government that caused me to take the initiative on 1/18/69 of contacting and assisting Bud Fensterwald on the narrow and specific issue of the autopsy photos. I took this step despite my unwillingness to be associated in any way, even indirectly, with Garrison's activities, and despite my misgivings about taking even so limited and circumscribed a step.

It appears that my pessimism when we talked on 1/31/69 was well-founded. I infer from your letters of 2/3/69 that Garrison, acting on advice from Vince Salandria, will not comply today with Judge Halleck's request that he cite materiality and relevance; and that consequently there will be no hearing on 2/7/69 and no opportunity for Dr. Wecht or Robert Forman to give expert testimony on the autopsy findings, photos, and X-rays. This is nothing less than a disaster, and one that could easily have been avoided.

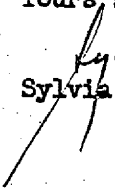
Whatever role has been played in this debacle by Vince Salandria, and whatever I may think of his part in the affair, the fact remains that the ultimate responsibility is Garrison's and cannot be shifted elsewhere. I think that you have already agreed that this is so.

Here is vindication--if it is even needed--of the position I had taken in mid-April 1967 and from which I have never deviated: that it would be morally indefensible and strategically disastrous for the WR critics individually or as a group to aid, associate with, or maintain condoning silence about Garrison. I said then, and I

have never deviated from that view, that the only moral course of action was for the WR critics to repudiate Garrison as vigorously as they had repudiated the WR, and for the same abuse on his part of fact, logic, and decency.

I take no pleasure in the events that are irresistably exonerating my personal stand or my prognostications. But I do wonder how much more must transpire before the pro-Garrison or the "neutral" WR critics take steps to salvage the situation, insofar as that is still possible. There is the immediate prospect of another miscarriage of justice and another sacrifice of an innocent man, over and above Oswald. We have just seen the New Orleans prosecutor inflict incalculable damage on authentic opposition to the WR. After witnessing his contemptible performance on the autopsy photos, after seeing that he has just helped the Warren gang and the government more than any roster of "agents," real or imagined, could ever have done, is it possible to credit Garrison with a valid "case" against any of those he has accused and defamed?

Yours sincerely,

  
Sylvia Meagher

cc: Dr. Wecht,  
Dr. Forman, et al