

15 November 1967

Dear Mort Sahl,

I assure you that no attempt was made to trick Mark Lane into providing a jacket quote for my book. The facts are as follows:

(1) I met Mark Lane exactly twice in my life, first on a radio program in which we both participated, in December 1966, and second in February 1967 when Mark Lane invited me to lunch and asked me to be present that same night when he taped a debate with Louis Nizer in the Channel 5 studios. During our lunch, Mr. Lane volunteered, completely on his own initiative, to provide a jacket quote for my book.

(2) Around April or May Mr. Lane wrote to me suggesting that I have my publishers send him the manuscript, so that he could prepare a jacket quote about the book rather than about my general work as a critic of the Warren Report.

(3) A set of uncorrected galley proofs was sent to Mr. Lane, exactly in the same way as to others who also provided jacket quotes. At the time the galley proofs were printed, my position with respect to District Attorney Jim Garrison was generally favorable.

(4) Between the printing of galley proofs and the final reading of page proofs some months later, and up to the last possible minute before the printing and binding of the book, I made a number of additions and changes in the text of the book, in the form of footnotes and revised pages or paragraphs. These marginal and incidental modifications were not communicated to any of the persons to whom the earlier galley proofs had been sent. One of the changes was the revision of one page dealing with the Garrison investigation. I had developed serious misgivings about Mr. Garrison as the result of his inaccurate and irresponsible public statements, his resort to quotation out of context, incomplete quotation, and, most particularly, his claim to have decoded an incriminating notation in the notebooks of Lee Harvey Oswald and Clay Shaw--a claim which he refused to withdraw even when it was made clear to him that he was misreading as "P O" the Cyrillic letters "D D" in Oswald's notebook. My complete loss of confidence in and respect for Mr. Garrison was naturally reflected in revision of my earlier favorable remarks about him. This was no secret but very well known to all the critics with whom I was regularly in touch, many of whom were in constant touch with Mark Lane.

(5) I am astonished by the implication in your remarks last night that Mark Lane would have reconsidered his jacket quotation on my 477-page book because I had changed the contents of one of the pages. Please let it be clear that I make no apology whatsoever for my remarks about Mr. Garrison in my book or elsewhere, but regard the failure of other critics of the Warren Report to apply to the Garrison investigation the same exacting critical standards as they applied to the Report as nothing less than disgraceful.

Yours sincerely,

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P.S. I hope that neither you nor Mr. Lane were serious in implying that I was not qualified to comment on the Garrison investigation because I had not talked to Mr. Garrison (in fact, I have had telephone conversations with him) or visited New Orleans. My book, Accessories After the Fact, is surely not "disqualified" by virtue of the fact that I have not talked to Earl Warren or visited Dallas. The Garrison investigation and the Warren Commission have to be judged on their record, not by private conversations or confidential information to a selected few; and on the public record, the two "investigations" have a common disregard for fact, logic, and truth which obliges the same repudiation and denunciation.