

Mr. William O'Connell  
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Dear Bill,

Transcript of my WBAI interview This is my first day without a nurse to hamper me so I am sending you herewith the original and only copy of the remarks in my "interview" at WBAI which their engineers unfortunately bolluxed. Please read both sides of each page. I hope you can work it out all right with someone else's voice. If not, feel free to leave me out of the broadcast, I will not be offended. I am on record already, in several letters. Unfortunately, the review of the CBS program which I wrote for TMO at Menahem's request was displaced by the Arab/Israeli war. For the next issue, dated October, it seems anticlimatic, so I suggested it be omitted. That was an unfortunate expenditure of time; but, like the WBAI fiasco, it could not be helped. Incidentally, the next issue of TMO will have an editorial on Garrison. No doubt his West Coast coterie will attribute the editorial to my "influence" or instigation--which will only demonstrate how little they know or understand either Arnold or me. The editorial is his own, completely; had I written it, it would have been somewhat different and perhaps even more displeasing to the Garrison claque.

Copies of ACCESSORIES AFTER THE FACT: Only this morning my editor Robert Ockene phoned to say that the official date of publication will be November 30th. The first copies of the book are due in New York City on October 27th, give or take two or three days. But at that time, I will get only one copy, for myself, and not the supply of 40 that I had intended to inscribe personally and mail to you and my other friends. That supply of 40-odd copies will not be available to me for a week or even two weeks after October 27th.

The initial copies which come on the 27th of October, apart from the one I will get, are for urgent delivery to the New York Times and other reviewers. I don't know if Ockene would put Pacifica on that first urgent review distribution; but you could ask. If you decide to write to him, he is at Bobbs-Merrill Co. 3 West 57 St. NYC NY 10019. Otherwise, the best I can do is to send you the corrected set of galleys now being read by Conora Crause O'Brien, if and when he returns them to me; or send you a copy of the book, as I had originally planned, early in November, when my supply of 40 arrives. I hope this is not completely confused or confusing; but I am far from completely well as yet, and these medications obviously contain anti-clarity elements as well as anti-histamines or anti-biotics or whatever. They also put me in rather a foul mood, which I feel sure is permeating this page.

End of Alliances and Declarations of War Maggie Field telephoned last night at about 7 p.m. and we had the following brief conversation, approximated from notes and recollection. She: It appears that she will have to stay on in New York after Joe returns, much as she hates to be alone in the hotel, but there is no other way. Me: This time I cannot be of much comfort to her, because our differences on Garrison have created an unbridgeable gulf between us. She: Yes. Me: Perhaps it is taking advantage of her even to raise the subject while I am ill and she will hesitate to excite me into a coughing fit, but I have to beg her to consider how much she is compromising her three years of work and her valuable book by her position on Garrison. She: What do I mean? Me: In your book you are attacking the lies of the Specters and Liebelers, but you are condoning the lies of Garrison. She: What lies? He has told no lies. Me: Hasn't he? What about that foul fabrication of the telephone code? She: That is a mistake... Me: What is the difference between the "mistakes" of the Specters and the Garrisons? She: They made so many... but I don't want to talk about it. Me: If we can't talk about that, we have nothing to talk about at all. She: No. Me: So be it. Goodbye. She: Goodbye.

I pity Garrison if this is the best defense that his ardent supporters can give him --that the WC front-men made so many "mistakes" that they are in a different class from him. What happens when his cumulative "mistakes" approach in sheer number those of the WC and its lawyers? Does he then lose his claque?

And I pity Maggie even more, if this is the only justification, or the best defense, she can produce for her position. Our friendship is over, in the present and for the future, but also, in the past--vitiating because it was predicated on false assumptions by each of us about the other. I never assumed the burden of accepting or condoning the lies of Garrison, or those who condone his dishonesty, whether the lies are to implicate Oswald or to exonerate him. I don't want to "clear" Oswald by dirty or dishonest means; and I certainly refuse to incriminate him on the say-so of such cheap mountebanks as Jim Garrison and his stooges Russo or his resident-critics Jones Harris and/or Mark Lane.

I consider myself at war with the Warren Commission, first and foremost. If and when I have time or occasion, I am also at war with CBS NBC Garrison Maggie Field Vince Salandria or anyone else who is peddling or covering up ugly lies and inventions to frame Oswald or anyone else for the assassination. I do not agree to frame Clay Shaw or even the CIA or Gordon Novel or IBJ. The only ground we critics have to stand on, with pride and self-respect, is scrupulous respect for facts, for truth, and for justice. If we can also manage the intelligence to see through grandiose charlatans, and to abjure sentimentalism about each other, all the better. I blame myself for cowardice and some hypocrisy with Maggie, between April and September--I should have told her right away what in the end I was compelled to say anyhow, and I should not have entered into the tacit or explicit "agreement" with her to avoid the issue and hope that it would go away, leaving our treasured relationship intact. That was a silly illusion and a total impossibility; I blame myself for not having faced it earlier.

That Maggie felt the need to search for some explanation such as my having "secret information that Garrison would fall on his face" to explain to herself my disgust with him is as pathetic as it is insulting to me. Apparently she feels that I am incapable of taking a stand on principle; I must have some ulterior motive, some inside information, some long-term strategy of self-interest. My "secret information" is on the pages of the New Orleans States-Item, in the NBC transcript of the Garrison "rebuttal," in his conversations with me, in the NY Review of Books, in Playboy, etc. As for linking me with Robert Kennedy--here Maggie compounds what is already ludicrous. I have never been in touch with him, nor tried to be, nor wanted to be. Rather, it is Maggie's mentor, Ray Marcus, who has made approaches to RFK--the last one, incidentally, seemed very promising, until he stupidly dragged Garrison into the situation (in which he was totally extraneous), and ruined the whole deal. I told Ray this to his face, so I am not saying anything to you that I have not already said to him. The remarkable thing about Ray is that he does not accept his own fallibility even when it hits him in the face like a wet herring--his retort was that he would do everything exactly the same way, if he had it to do over. Just the same, he has shifted all his eggs quietly from the basket of Big Jim Garrison to the casket of the No. 5 Man. Ray Hath Spoken: Now, if Garrison fails, the ONLY way to break the case is the No. 5 Man. I think, and I said this to Ray himself, that if Garrison flops, he had better stop issuing pronouncements altogether.

I cannot pretend that I am not disgusted, bitter, and angry. I have been holding hands with a bunch of Liebelers, in a so-called alliance against a bunch of Specters. But I am disgusted, bitter, and angry above all with myself, for stupidity, sentimentality, and cowardice. I did not want to lose my friends. How stupid I was, to fail to realize that I had no friends to lose, only "allies" while our interests appeared to coincide. I want my position to be absolutely clear to you, Bill, because we do agree on Garrison.

And so far as I am concerned, you can show them letter to anyone -- I have nothing to hide. Sylvia