

5 March 1968

Dear Bill,

Last night we enjoyed an un-Haroldian Weisberg, as advertised in the enclosed handbill. I did not remain for the entire evening but as of the end of three-quarters of the program, Harold was calm, thoughtful, careful, and even personally cordial towards me. Truly, I was surprised; but it just shows what the absence of adversaries and/or the presence of a sympathetic audience can do, even for the Hyattstown Tiger.

There was nothing "new" in the presentation; or, if there was, it escaped me. He discussed largely the contents of his book O in N.O., ranging far afield of course from the actual assassination; he outlined again the various culpabilities of Wesley Liebeler and the other lawyers who handled the New Orleans investigation of the Commission; early in his exposition, he proceeded to recommend my chapter on Oswald and the State Department, and later on graciously added to the moderator's announcement that he, Harold, would be glad to sign copies of his book on sale in the rear, that I too would no doubt be willing to sign copies (of my book, I presume).

During the intermission, he came over and chatted with me quite pleasantly, and with many significant hints and rollings of the eyes about the important new findings he was making. He was quite restrained in his infrequent references to Garrison. In some ways, Harold almost disassociates himself from Garrison—not for the reasons which govern thee and me, but because he wishes to make it crystal clear that he did major pioneering work on the New Orleans aspect of the case independently and before or without Garrison. He carefully avoided replying to a specific question from the audience about Clay Shaw; but he did denounce Shaw's lawyers for libeling him and then failing to subpoena him along with the 20 others they subpoenaed recently to demonstrate an alleged conspiracy against Shaw (Garrison Himself, Mark Lane, Mort Sahl, and sundry other big-mouths). He was equally careful in his references to others accused—Bradley, and Kerry Thornley—but did make clear by innuendo that he regards them as highly suspect if not out-and-out guilty.

The whole Banister/Ferrie/Arcacha-Smith/Novel/CIA/Cuban-exile syndrome was again described, with many digressions from these digressions. What, in heaven's name, does any of this have to do with Dallas? No one else seemed to wonder; and during the question period, the only discomfiting inquiry from the audience had to do with Garrison's free-loading at the Sands and his position vis a vis Marcello. Harold said with straight face that Marcello's activities in Orleans Parish were open and aboveboard—it was in Jefferson Parish, outside of Garrison's jurisdiction, that he played his role of kingpin in the crime empire. As for the freeloading—to which Garrison has admitted, which Harold seems not to know—that was all nasty slanting by LIFE. Ah, wilderness! Eden could not be more innocent.

And here ends my report, since I need the next few hours to ponder on the Weisberg cordiality and other mysteries. Warm regards,

P.S. My intelligence network advises that Mark Lane is complaining that he got a very nasty letter from me. Whatever can he mean?

