

8 June 1966

Dear Maggie,

I wasn't able to reach you by phone Monday or Tuesday night; and now that you are to be home tonight, I am not sure that I will be able to phone.

On Sunday, my youngest niece was married (I was not sure from the hectic pace of events the previous weekend that I would make it to the wedding! but I did). Susan, 23, is left by herself in a large house; I am trying to persuade her to stay here with me, temporarily at least, and she will come tonight and stay a few days, I hope. (She is my favorite, and has recently become very interested in the case, and very helpful, too.)

One reason I tried to reach you was that Dave Lifton led me to think that you had become ill at San Francisco, and I was worrying. But your daughter didn't seem upset when the operator put through the call, and maybe Dave was mistaken. The other reason I wanted to reach you was to exchange news—developments are so thick and fast these days that letters are just too slow.

You have probably heard by now that I had a complete break with Welsh and Ramparts, after reaching the end of my patience with his continuous shifting and changing of plans. Welsh never told me until Saturday that he was using a Mark Lane chapter—which of course is his privilege. But he also told me (1) that he would probably not use any of the three chapters Sauvage had let him have, largely at my urging, and (2) that after everything was settled for the use of my Tippit chapter—according to Bill Turner, who surely was not speaking merely for himself but for Ramparts—Welsh now wanted my Odio chapter instead. I really blew my top. The two Daves had been taking up a great deal of my time, when I was really very pressed with TWO commitments (which, once made, are never changed, cancelled, or otherwise uncertain) and other urgent matters connected with Ed's book. Okay, that I was glad to do—but not glad to do it in vain, as these hysterical kindergartners changed and rechanged and again changed and cancelled plans that I had believed to be definite.

I blame myself. I gained a real distrust of Welsh after the Salandria "discovery" episode; but I then did agree, at Welsh's request, to check material on the WR before publication. Then I allowed myself to be progressively disarmed by the impression Welsh conveyed of "men at work" in earnest, about to do something meaningful on the case, at long last. I should have kept in mind the previous incident, and been forewarned, but I did not. So I really blew my top when Welsh asked me for my Odio chapter—perhaps the most important in my manuscript—and made a complete break with him. Now, with the appearance of the Newsweek story, it seems that Ramparts may cancel the special issue completely—it seems they were intent on being "first," getting the headlines and the credit, not concerned with the teamwork of mounting a concerted, long-range challenge to the WR.

So, to my regret, I find myself without any confidence in Ramparts, either as to their motivation or their reliability. I realize that I am getting a little testy, what with all the pressures from every direction—but testy only in the sense that while I am ready for combat with our enemies, I am not willing to suffer abuse from my friends or colleagues.

I suspect that Welsh was ready to dump Sauvage's chapter(s) and change mine because of overlap with Mark Lane's chapter. Had I known that he was to appear in the special issue, I would have thought twice about even submitting my own work as Welsh had asked me to do. I know that you and I differ on Lane; I find him absolutely unprincipled as a human being, and dubious as a researcher or Warrenologist (I know that he did very little personal research). I am still waiting to receive his brochure; but even without seeing it, I have the impression that he rushed it into print mainly to claim credit for turning up the FBI Summary Report of Dec. 9--first published by Salandria, which makes it all the more ironic that Lane and H. Weisberg should be competing for the credit, and that both excruciated themselves to get into print before Ed Epstein, thinking the Summary Report was all he had. I would like to see their surprised little faces when they discover that he has the FBI Supplemental Report of Jan. 13, 1964, and hitherto-unseen photos, not just what they tried to pirate.

Have you read INQUEST by now? Salandria, who usually is predictable, astonished me by the vehemence of his anger at Ed. He feels that Ed has shirked a real confrontation with the WC and let them off with a gentle tap on the wrist instead of a hard slam. I feel that way too, as you will see in my review of Ed's book in the July TMO; but (1) I know that Ed genuinely feels some kind of irrational sympathy for the WC and its lawyers; and (2) the fact is that his non-polemical attitude has made his book sensationally powerful--as witness, the NEWSWEEK story, also the front-page coverage in the LA Times and the Washington Post and, as I just learned, a terrific pro-Epstein front page story in the Detroit News of June 5th!

Ed's book is having a terrific reception, three front page stories before it is even released officially, and I understand that it has made far more impression on the hard-boiled reporters than their stories--or their silence--indicates. The WC lawyers seem to be in disarray, with a series of feeble and unimaginative alibis and ridiculous recriminations--imagine attributing Ed's book, or any of the other serious criticism, to "morbid curiosity"! The question is: where will it lead, if anywhere? Will it be just a 7-day wonder, or will it force a reinvestigation?

Ed is pretty testy himself, these days; I imagine he has a lot of overt and subconscious anxiety about the form of attack to be made on him; Jones Harris, self-appointed godfather to the book, is mizzling and crackling all over the place; and so it goes. I guess I am now out of steam, unable to recall anything else that I should report. Maggie, do let me hear from you just as soon as you can manage--and if I can use the phone tonight or tomorrow, I will call you. A big embrace,

As ever,