

7316 - 13th Av nu N.W.
Seattle, Washington 98107
27 May 69

Mrs. Sylvia Meagher
302 West Twelfth Street
New York, New York 10014

Dear Sylvia,

As you can see, I am still stuck with this typewriter. Not only are typewriter repair artisans expensive, they are inept. Obviously a plot.

Here, as you requested, is a once-over-lightly about yours truly: I'm 27 (matter of fact, today is my birthday), unmarried, eight credits shy of a law degree and might finish this summer (no rush; I squeaked through the draft). ACLUer, cynic, dirty old man, polemicist of sorts.

I got into the WR controversy more or less by backing into its blades. Initially, I was revolted by the critics, and thought the controversy to be in the worst possible taste, manned on the other side by an appalling array of special pleaders, buck-hungry losers and (surprise! surprise!) paranoids. I thought it silly at best to rely for a case upon an institution so manifestly incapable of dealing with a crisis situation as the media. Anyway, I did not follow the subject with any kind of thoroughness. What I had done was to create a frame of mind wherein allegations defending the nascent official story carried great weight for me. By that time I think I had realized just what was involved if, indeed, there had been a conspiracy and if it was not being uncovered by the investigation. I was, therefore, tenaciously unwilling to even consider the necessary conclusions drawn from the existence of a plot.

When the WR came out, I got one. I didn't even wait for the commercial edition, but got one from the GPO. I read it cover to cover and confidently predicted that all those strange little people like Lane would find a new hobby. Being the only person I knew who had read the WR, I lorded it over the heretics I knew in my usual pompous fashion -- all this on the basis of one reading of the WR; I doubt that I could have cited a single fact from it other than the obvious, much less deal with informed criticism (fortunately, I never was asked). But I kept encountering people among my acquaintances who obviously weren't special pleaders or any other noxious variety of worm. That's when I made my big mistake: I decided to inquire into the facts. Who knows? At least I might become an informed supporter of the WR, naively not realizing the contradiction in terms expressed by that phrase.

So I got a paperback RTJ and read it between festivities on an Indian reservation in eastern Washington on George Washington's Birthday weekend, 1968. That is, I read it between festivities when I wasn't plastered from helping the daughter of the Indian agent and her fiance celebrate their engagement. Anyway, I got quite a jolt from that book, and started dipping into the controversy. Before long I was a full-fledged, though solitary, critic.

SM
27 May 69

My only regret was that I had gotten into the fray too late to make a difference: that Garrison fellow had solved the mystery at a time that was most inconvenient for my ego.

About a year later, my ego still intact, I heard Lane speak on campus and signed a copy of his petition. That was the doing of Edd Jeffords, who was running a one-man CCI chapter out of his home. So I wrote him and got active. A couple of months later I mooched a vacation in L.A. from Fred Newcomb, so I made the pilgrimage, learning about factions, hostility, research, the Housewives' Underground, photographs, Bradley, Jim Rose, James Hepburn, and Ray Marcus' deep affection for the syllogism. I consider that trip to have been my real baptism.

And here I am, in all my brazen glory.

As to Turner, if I remember correctly, the associate of mine who sent Award the blank check for a copy of his Garrison book, and who was told they weren't publishing one, did it in the second or third quarter of last year. I'll have to check. At any rate, Turner seemed positive that his book was on the verge of being published when Larry and I saw him last September.

Regarding Maggie Field's book-cum-panoplies, a friend was interested in getting one. Just running off a copy would have cost several hundred dollars, so the production difficulties probably would have been enormous for a commercial firm. I, too, know of no instance where Federal intervention has prevented the publication of anything, although Lane, in his speech on campus here, related that an FBI official informed a publisher (I think it was Holt, Rinehart & Winston, as a matter of fact) that the Bureau was interested in not seeing RTJ published.

I know about Salandria and Weisberg turning anti-Boxley. I was sworn to secrecy about the whole bit, complete with oaths that would make a Mau-Mau ill, so I'd keenly appreciate your keeping this under your hat. Garrison was planning a press conference for last Nov. 22, announcing the structure and staffing of the plot that killed JFK, RFK and King. Same plot. At the 11th hour, Garrison was practicing his speech before Matt Herron, John Pilger and Weisberg. Nancy Perrin Rich is the girl in the polka-dot dress and was in Dealey Plaza, along with Crisman and Bradley, etc., etc. The listeners were appalled, and Weisberg staggered out of the room to call Salandria to have the press conference called off (Weisberg, having played devil's advocate and having ~~klxxx~~ urged caution time and again, was by that time virtually excommunicated and had little influence with Big Jim or his closest, and most influential, staffers). Salandria talked Garrison out of the press conference and a hurried post-mortem was held. Garrison had based his allegations on Boxley's research. Boxley, who rarely came to the office and who almost never put his name on anything, was summoned to defend his work. He didn't show, so he got the boot. All of Boxley's stuff was "classified,"

SM

27 May 69

meaning that the staff was forbidden to see it. A little checking, once they were allowed to see it, showed how flimsy it all was. Sometime during all the confusion, a guy claimed to have been interviewed by a CIA recruiter, Boxley, a couple of years after the date when Boxley said he left its employ. If I remember correctly, this allegation was made before there was any release of his real name, and the alleged recruit knew it (of course, keeping a secret around that place was a lot like trying to sculpt Michaelangelo's David with seven toothpicks and a butter knife, but knowing his real name as early as I think he did would seem to indicate either his veracity or a source of information close to the office). Turner got into it because he had done some background work for Boxley. I don't imagine the atmosphere in New Orleans was terribly conducive to trust at that time, so doubts about Turner's veracity, which had previously been dismissed by nothing more than giving funny looks to the bearers, were received more openly.

Boxley's only real fan is Penn Jones, who has invented his own stab-in-the-back theory involving Bethell, and counts as agents Salandria, Weisberg, Schoener and Marcus (how he got into it, I'll never know). Fensterwald has kept the faith, too, and is actively pursuing some of Boxley's leads. As far as I know, Garrison is still on Bud's board, but he couldn't be paying much attention. I presume that Turner disbelieves that Boxley is an agent, since he got caught by the fallout, and that Sprague remains a believer because some of his photographs and his interpretation of them keyed in quite well to Boxley's scenario.

I heard a story which, considering the grapevine, is too good to be true, but which would be true, if there was justice in the universe. I heard that during the Shaw trial, Sprague was wandering the streets of New Orleans with a chalk mark on the back of his coat, representing the President's entry wound. Some innocent bystander would say, "Hey mister, there's a chalk mark on your coat." Sprague would then back the guy into a corner and work over the single-bullet theory, whip out some photos and do the Frenchy-Bradley-Crisman look-alike bit, the Z238 shoulder dip bit, and on and on. He must have left a string of stunned Cajuns from one end of the French Quarter to the other.

Flammonde certainly proved by asking your collaboration that hope springs eternal. You know, I read that part about the Centro Mondiale Commerciale three times and it's still fuzzy. Parenthetically, I asked a South African friend to check it out. He ~~is~~ ~~is~~ said that it is listed in the Johannesburg business directory, but has no phone. Something may very well be going on there but, unlike some, I do not automatically think CIA when faced with oddities or dishonesties. Faging Igor Vaganov! Wait'll Flammonde hears that I found a guy whose brother is thought to be associated with an Italian thought to be a neighbor

SM
27 May 69

of an Arab thought to be King Farouk's chief eunuch's best friend, who is thought to be the ringleader of a notorious band of Basques reliably reported to be masterminding a sheep-smuggling ring thought to be the source of certain poor-quality long Johns thought to be readily available in stores in Virginia thought to be the special targets of a shoplifting cabal thought to be composed of gypsies from Langley, Virginia. It is reliably reported that CIA agents scratch a lot. Spooky, no?

I didn't know about Paris-as-research-leader, or about his speaking at two dollars a hit. I suppose he is trying to help finance the Committee, since Bud failed to get any of the foundation support he confidently expected. I wrote a letter to Fred Cook outlining what's happening, but no answer yet. I hate to see people like him and Faulk wasting their time and reputations. By the way, even a lot of the Garrison 100%ers won't have anything to do with Bud and his creation.

We critics may not be able to dent the enemy, but we sure can clobber each other. Things have reached the point now where I doubt that any solution to the assassination could satisfy all of us. Pet theories, held with all the fervor of Reformation-era theologies, plus warm memories of alliances and bitter ones of personal disputes, would probably preclude unanimity. That happy day when you and Garrison, me and Bud, Lane and Weisberg, walk arm and arm into a press conference to announce our complete satisfaction with somebody's ideas, will remain a Utopian dream. I, for one, know that if I got close enough to Bud to be arm in arm with him, all I'd want to do would be to turn it into a hammerlock.

I used to think that critical sweetness and light was both possible and desirable, ignoring the basic fact that critics are as human as anybody else, so we aren't going to be any less irksome than any other group of people. Add to this the simple observation that every one of us is an emphatic, and at least slightly eccentric, personality, and the problem doubles. ~~There are~~ There are some critics who, for all their work and frustration, for all I have in common with them, I just don't want to associate with. So I gave up.

I'm pontificating again, so I'd better call a halt. Please don't think I consider you impertinent in asking about me. I'm flattered, actually. Feel free at any time.

Best paranoid wishes,

Woy