

18 April 1969

Mr. George E. Rennar
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Dear George,

Thanks for your very interesting letter of the 15th, and thanks also for your extremely generous comments on AAF--especially heartening because the book has been rather ignored, and vindictively ignored in some major publications which had devoted their space to the glorification of the great garrison.

What can one say to the half-hilarious, half-tragic account of the garrison clique in the aftermath of the trial? Poor little Burton--he has perhaps the excuse of naive and tender years for his enthusiastic folly, and at least he has had the grace to go into a state of shock. Some of the others do not have the mitigation of youth or inexperience, nor even the courage to give up the ghost now when there is no longer even a shred of any basis for their fantasies about this monumental windbag.

For a long time, these faithful exhorted me to suspend judgment until garrison had his day in court, just to wait for the trial, reserve my criticisms and remain silent until due process had run its course (for all the world, as if it was garrison rather than Shaw who was entitled to any benefits of doubt or presumption of innocence). Implicit in these appeals was the undertaking on their side as well as my side to be bound by the outcome of the trial--the trial was to be the test that would vindicate their support of garrison, or my attacks on him.

Well, the trial has kicked all their hopes into smithereens---it was a fiasco even more mortifying than I would have predicted. Art Kevin and Sandy Hochberg are the only ones, to my knowledge, who have had the decency to acknowledge publicly that they had been mistaken about garrison and that they were deeply disappointed. I am really sad to hear on every side that others--Ray and his flock, Salandria, Lane, etc.--have learned nothing, understood nothing, and respond to a humiliating proof of their wild misjudgment by claiming their infallibility with even greater chutzpah than before. If they could extract from the proceedings in New Orleans a grain of exoneration for their sycophancy as garrison satellites, for the disrepute they have helped to earn for all criticism of the WR, for the loss of their credibility as seekers of truth and spokesmen for justice---well, they are welcome to such illusory crumbs of comfort. The record is now so crystal-clear that no further debate is possible---actually, I think this was really true as far back as May 1967 when the so-called "code" was heralded to the world.

Few events better served to illustrate the complete dissolution of intellectual and moral integrity in the garrison camp than Mark Lane's mid-trial interview in which, apparently expecting a guilty verdict (though I cannot fathom why), he announced his willingness to accept the jury's pronouncement and warned the American people that they could do no less. No sooner was the acquittal than Lane was in print taking issue with the verdict and bravely exuding confidence that history would sustain him. But one could expect no less nonchalant a volte-face and no less instant hypocrisy from the man who fabricated emissaries from RFAK not once but twice (to Trevor-Roper, who denied the Blatant falsehood, and to garrison, who corroborated it).

Well, if Marcus finds solace in being shipwrecked in the company of such as Lane or Paris Flammonde (whose book I do not rank among the top six hundred, as you will see in the enclosed review), he is welcome to it. And Salandria, who has shown an awful propensity for the most dangerous kinds of error, whether in reading the Zapruder film, or the doorway photo, and who took the critics several times to the brink of disaster in pre-garrison days---may he really call himself a devil libertarian while he sits with the prosecution and tries to railroad an innocent man, and then actively conspires or silently condones to submit the exonerated victim to double jeopardy?

Thanks to "critics" of that stripe, I am very very discouraged about the prospects of publication of any new work, whether Lifton's or Newcomb's, regardless of its merit (though I have tried not to infect them with my pessimism). And this time, I cannot really flay the press with my usual vigor, for garrison's cheap lunacies and abuses of his power have made the term "WR critic" a rather dirty one. Many many editorials on the Shaw trial pointedly reported the presence and collaboration given garrison by noted WR critics, and inundated them as well as garrison himself with the acid of their disgust. That is exactly what I had feared when I begged the critics time and again not to jeopardize our moral and strategic position by association with such a transparent practitioner of fraud and injustice, and urged them publicly to repudiate his falsehoods, inventions, and irresponsible mischief. Instead, they created a monster who has virtually destroyed everything that was painfully and patiently achieved by our individual and collective labor.

I haven't any knowledge of some of the raw material you mention as having seen recently for the first time. I had formed my view of garrison on the basis of his public pronouncements between February and May 1967; but subsequently I had "inside" information from a number of sources which presented a picture of the most incredible lack of investigative competence, a picture of hysterical and incontinent little boys playing cops and robbers or cloaks and daggers. I only hope that one day someone on the inside will put the whole bedraggled affair on the record.

Well, I've gone on at greater length than I had intended. Your point on Markham is very well taken and, to extend your analogy, clever Oswald not only shot JFK in the front from the rear and Tippit in the front from the side but he also missed the front, side, and rear of that sitting duck, General Walker. What a gamut of marksmanship! Best of luck on your presentation to Senator Jackson, I hope he can tear himself away from propagandizing for the "safeguard" system long enough to give you his full attention.

Yours sincerely,

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