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10 Oct 68

Mrs. Sylvia Meagher
302 West 12th Street
New York, New York 10014

Dear Mrs. Meagher,

Please forgive my two-month delay, but one thing keeps leading to another around here. I even found myself writing an 11,000-word article on the assassination, and then cutting it unmercifully for publication.

Enclosed is the current draft of my condensation. I have incorporated your four suggestions. I trust it is adequate. If you feel it is, then it should appear as is in the issue after next of FORUM. The editor has assured me that both you and the topic are worth the space.

The next issue should be out shortly. In a mild way, we have been on the short end of the civil liberties stick, having been turned down by three printers, one of whom solemnly stated that our leaders are ordained by God. That worthy is a rube who has printed the Rightist parody of the 23rd Psalm, "The government is my shepherd."

The next FORUM will be pretty much like the last, in format and content. After that, I hope increased funds and space will allow us to produce a true forum and ~~xx~~ a clearinghouse for the valuable research that quietly continues. I have a few plans for increasing circulation and contributions. For instance, I think I stand a rather good chance of getting the mailing list of the Washington State McCarthy organization, which has been donating it to various good causes.

My next major project will be the meeting with the two Congressmen and, probably, Senator Jackson, who has expressed himself as feeling that conspiracies were responsible for the deaths of both Kennedys and Dr. King. I intend to give a presentation on the volumes and closely-related issues.

If any of them respond, I hope to be quite a thorn to them. My impression is that the critics who have directly approached public officials about the assassination have failed to exploit promising toeholds.

By the way, any ideas you might have for making a low-budget presentation more effective would be greatly appreciated.

Best wishes,



Sylvia Meagher, author of the excellent ACCESSORIES AFTER THE FACT and of the only good index to the 26 volumes, opposes Garrison. Kerry Thornley, charged by Garrison with perjury, has received \$100 from her ~~husband~~ ^{since} she feels he was deliberately charged because he lacked the funds for proper legal defense. The following was excerpted and condensed from material supplied to FORUM by Mrs. Meagher.

That the Commission's apologists have made a concerted attack on Garrison proves nothing in his favor, in and of itself. One is not obliged to take sides in a gang war in which both sides have only contempt for truth.

Prof. Popkin asks ("The Case for Garrison," Sept. 14, 1967 New York Review of Books) if "Garrison's theory" that the assassination was planned and carried out by a group of anti-Castro Cuban exiles, based in New Orleans and involved with the CIA, is plausible. A number of critics independently arrived at similar or identical conclusions long before Garrison. The testimony and exhibits of the Commission almost compel such an assumption.

The question is, can Garrison sustain his charges against the people he has accused? I am not so impressed as Prof. Popkin with Garrison's procedural successes to date, nor do I regard the conviction of Dean Andrews as a triumph, since it leaves unresolved the exact nature of the perjury. Was it that Andrews, knowing that Shaw was Bertrand, failed to make a positive identification? Or was it that, knowing that Shaw was not Bertrand, Andrews failed to make an explicit denial?

As to Garrison's other courtroom victories thus far, familiarity with the judgment and conclusions reached by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and his eminent colleagues after the investigation of the assassination leaves me without the smallest tendency to assume that jurists are necessarily just, or that their rulings are necessarily correct.

Garrison says in his Playboy interview (October, 1967) that we will never see certain CIA documents, including a secret memo "destroyed while being photocopied." The copy destroyed was not the only one extant. A second copy was transmitted to the Commission on May 8, 1964, as is clear from Exhibit 948. It is true that this memo may never be made public, but not because it no longer exists.

Garrison alleges that there are "signs of stress" on the back of the Stemmons Freeway traffic sign, in frames 208 to 211 of the Zapruder film — frames which he says have been suppressed. If the frames are missing, how does he know that they "reveal signs of stress"? Apparently the information that the stress marks are on the film and not on the traffic sign (which disposes of the now-abandoned theory that the marks were caused by the impact of a bullet) has not yet caught up with the district attorney.

Like the Commission, Garrison asserts that Oswald "couldn't drive" and therefore was not the "Oswald" who test-drove

a car on Nov. 9, 1963. I will point out again that Oswald went to take his driver's test on the very same date, but found the motor vehicle station closed. Obviously, he could drive well enough on that day to apply for a license.

In an interview in Los Angeles, Garrison charged that page 47 of Oswald's address book had been suppressed. In fact, it is published in full.

On ABC television Garrison alleged that a Ft. Worth telephone number was written in Oswald's notebook, and that Ruby made two calls to the same number. Garrison neglected to say that it is identified as the number of TV station KUTV. Many persons who are complete strangers to each other may keep a record of or make calls to the phone number of a TV station, for any number of reasons.

It seems clear from these examples that Garrison is not a careful student of the published documentation and that he has been less than candid in discussing the contents of the exhibits in some instances. However much he prefers to "avoid getting involved with details," it is self-evident that errors of detail can lead right to appalling miscarriages of justice, and that details are of cardinal importance in any homicide and certainly in a conspiracy that culminated in a Presidential assassination.

A critic of the Warren Report, it seems to me, is obliged to apply to Garrison's evidence the same strict and objective tests which he applied to the Commission's evidence. By that yardstick, I find little merit in the testimony of Russo and Bundy about Clay Shaw. Russo's story, quite apart from the questions raised about resort to hypnosis and sodium pentathol to elicit his story, seems to me inherently bereft of credibility. I can scarcely believe that three conspirators discussed the logistics of a plan to assassinate President Kennedy in the presence of a fourth person, whom they left at liberty to inform on them whenever the spirit moved him. Also, the notes of the first interview with Russo written by Garrison's aide Andrew Sciambra do not include this episode despite Sciambra's insistence that it was discussed.

As for Bundy's allegations, I am skeptical not because of his past drug addiction, but because I reject an identification by any witness, however upright, of a person or persons viewed on one occasion, from a distance, almost four years earlier.

Garrison has claimed that the notation "P.O. 19106" appears in Oswald's notebook and in Shaw's, and that it is a cryptogram for Ruby's unpublished phone number. The notation in Oswald's notebook is actually D D 19106 (the Cyrillic "D"), as may readily be seen.

I am willing to wait for the unfolding of the evidence, by both sides, at the Shaw trial. But I refuse to suspend all

judgment while we wait, and I certainly refuse to deny Clay Shaw the benefit of doubt to which he is entitled and to give it, instead, to his accuser.

As a student of the assassination and a critic of the Warren Report — which I regard not as a gigantic bungle but as a deliberate and infamous fraud — I ask (and with some bitterness) what can give more aid and comfort to the apologists for the Warren Commission, or do more harm to responsible criticism, than the reckless, inaccurate, and insupportable pronouncements of a district attorney who has managed to shift world attention away from the central issue — the Warren Report — to an arch-fantasy of probably irrelevant events in New Orleans?