

7316 - 13th Avenue N.W.
Seattle, Washington 98107
10 Aug 68

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

Dear Mrs. Meagher,

Thank you for yours of 20 July and 3 August. I would have answered sooner, but I just spent three weeks in Los Angeles, and then had to fight off some flu after I returned to what I naively thought of as a saner climate.

I appreciate your sending the letters and the "American Book Collector" notice. I have already sent for the magazine. I shall return your letters within a day or two. I do not seem to have a manila envelope at hand.

Apropos of bibliographies, Washington C.C.I. is preparing one. We are blessed with a supporter who collects whatever he can on the assassination, and for the last month or so he has been compiling list after list. He has already gone far beyond anything the Reader's Guide ever thought to index, and we think it will be a fairly good job. Let me know if you want one upon completion.

enclosed is what I extracted from your letters. I tried to include your major substantive criticisms, and some on your method and reasoning. I hope you consider it adequate.

Enclosed is also the "Forum" containing my review of Accessories. I confess that this newsletter was one of our less spectacular ones -- probably one of our less spectacular months as far as money went. With a little more space, I probably could have written a vastly superior review. As it stands, it is hardly even adequate.

My point on cooperation between pro- and anti-Garrison critics is simply that the ultimate solution to the mystery will be federal, and that no matter what Garrison accomplishes, or fails to, honest federal intervention in the John Kennedy case will come about only when the Warren Commission is discredited on its own merits. It is for that reason that Washington C.C.I. will deliver a presentation this fall to two Congressmen and, with any luck at all, a Senator. We hope to give the Commission both barrels.

I feel that this merely recognizes that nobody who believes the Commission correct will see any validity in any probe, project, or whatnot, and that it is the major task of critics to expose the Commission's evidence and conclusions. And in this there is, I believe, an identity of interests on both sides of the Garrison fence.

My trip to Los Angeles was very enjoyable and interesting, except for the smog. I met most of the critics there, except Burton, who was on vacation, and George Thomsen, whom I did not especially want to see, anyway. I had friendly and fruitful conversations with people who have not spoken to each other in ages, people who dislike

each other with a deep and abiding passion.

Not only did I get filled in on the factions, I also saw some of the research going on, and heard about other work. Lifton told me he has come up with some Archive material of some importance in several different areas, but he is sitting on it for his book. I'll have to wait until I see the book, I fear. I confess inability to see the human figures he claims to have spotted in the trees. I also saw Fred Newcomb's work on 133-A and 133-B. He has proven conclusively, without reference to allegedly incompatible nose and body shadows, that they are composites. Highly original guy, that Fred. He's looking for a publisher for it.

Anyway, it was a lot of fun, and I came back with some items to spring on the gentlemen this fall.

Incidentally, we have our local scholar looking for that item on Oswald's attending the Powers trial. Let us know if you encounter it first.

With kindest regards,



George E. Rennar

There is no unanimity among critics on Garrison. Sylvia Meagher, author of Accessories After the Fact and of the only good index to the 26 volumes, opposes Garrison. She recently contributed \$100 to Kerry Thornley, charged by Garrison with perjury.

.
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 ~~had~~ 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~~x~~ 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.

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.

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?