

VINCENT J. SALANDRIA
ATTORNEY AND COUNSELOR AT LAW
2226 DELANCEY PLACE
PHILADELPHIA 3, PA.

LD 7-7520

February 8, 1969

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

Dear Sylvia:

This is hardly the proper moment to engage in a defense of Salandria. The purpose of this note is not designed to accomplish this inconsequential function. But your letter of February 5 to Harold of which a copy was forewarded to me, seems to be an effort to establish a true record of events. Therefore, I write in order to assist in establishing a truer record.

Garrison's office did not operate on my advice in its decision of February 5. I did not influence this decision. Harold knew or had reason to know when he wrote that letter that such was the case. On the evening of February 2 when I learned that Garrison's office had made its decision, I immediately called Bud Fensterwald and informed him. I also asked Mr. Fensterwald to call Harold. I suggested that he do so, because I hoped that his friendship with Harold would make the news easier for him to take. I specifically instructed Bud Fensterwald that he was to inform Harold that I was totally irrelevant to the decision. Let it be clear, however, that after consultation with several of the critics, all of whom were in agreement, my decision would have been, if I had made it, in conformity with their advice and the ultimate course chosen by Garrison.

On February 5 or before, Garrison's office had submitted to Judge Halleck the opening statement of the prosecution to the jury in the Shaw case, a brief on applicable Louisiana law, a certification of the relevancy and materiality of the X-rays and photographs to the New Orleans trial, and a prayer urging the court to honor the subpoena and provide the X-rays and photographs of the autopsy of President Kennedy for the Shaw proceedings. The office had decided against presenting witnesses before Judge Halleck after he had openly announced his prejudice against the New Orleans prosecution effort when on February 5 at a side-bar conference he stated: "When is that circus in New Orleans going to end so that the real carnival (The Mardi Gras) can begin?"

Sylvia, I will be glad to discuss the matter in greater detail later in the presence of Harold. But for the present information of Drs. Forman and Wecht there must be an adjustment of the record. Harold, I trust, has already seen fit to amend the letter which constituted a general indictment of me, with respect to the details I have outlined herein. If the pressure of his work has made it difficult for him to retract these errors, I feel confident that he will at this time be agreeable to verifying the correctness of what I have detailed here.

Cordiaaly


Vince

cc: Harold Weisberg

P.S. On January 31 while Harold and I conversed by phone, I expressed to Harold the thought that there was a need to reevaluate the decision to continue with the introduction of evidence in Washington. I advised him that my new reservations were generated by Judge Halleck's introduction on that day of a new concept that the link between New Orleans and Dallas would have to be proven by witnesses and other evidence in Washington. Harold refused to have me to go Maryland to discuss this matter with him. As it turned out my opinion was never sought in the final decision, but I offer this item as support for the idea that I was still willing to maintain an open mind and hear Harold out on that date.