

MEDICAL SCHOOL
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY AND NEUROLOGY
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA 55455

November 4, 1968

Miss Sylvia Meagher
302 West 12 Street
New York, N.Y.
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Dear Miss Meagher,

Since I doubt that you have the slightest idea who I am, please permit me to give you some brief background material on myself before going on to the major point of my letter. After hearing Mark Lane speak at Cornell University in the Fall of 1964, I spoke with him and then began researching the assassination through an examination of the material containing in the 26 volumes. Since that time I have traveled to the Archives, written and phoned witnesses, and interviewed a number of them in person. Except for Mark Lane's articles in the National Guardian and George & Patricia Nash's article, I never saw any of the early work on the case which got into print, but when the first books were published I was astounded at how much farther other researchers had gotten as compared with my own work. It wasn't until 1966 that I overcame my shyness and visited Vince Salandria in my home town of Philadelphia. In fact, I had made public appearances to discuss the Warren Report prior to making my first contact with a "first generation" critic. Since that time I have had brief contact with Mark Lane, Hal Verb (a west coast researcher), and Tink Thompson with mutual exchange of information. (At one point I was supposed to help put together a medical appendix for Tink's book.) I have spoken on the telephone and correspond with Penn Jones Jr., Paul Hoch, and Dave Lifton, and was consulted by CBS when they were putting together their special on the Warren Report. I have seen and spoken to Garrison once, at his request, but my only contact with the New Orleans D.A.'s office is through chief investigator Louis Ivon for whom I have a great deal of respect. I have become a close friend of the Salandrias and Weisbergs and share all of my work with Vince and Harold. My literary contributions are few: 1. a series of 5 feature articles published in the Minneapolis Star-Tribune early in 1967; 2. a lengthy piece written for Ivory Tower Magazine; and 3. co-authoring "The Watchman Waketh in Vain" with Tom Katen and Vince Salandria currently being serialized in the Midlothian Mirror. (For the record, I have already disavowed the errors which crept into the latter after Tom Katen re-wrote the part of the article dealing with the assassination and Vince and he submitted it without carefully checking it for errors.) By the way, I owe you thanks for answering some last minute questions in regard to the footnoting of my magazine article which was done through Vince when I called him during Christmas of 1966. I spend most of my time making public appearances to speak about the assassination. I am a graduate of Cornell University and am currently working for a PhD in Clinical Psychology at the University of Minnesota. In addition, I work half time in the Dept. of Psychiatry Research of their medical school.

Recently, Dave Lifton sent me copies of your letters to Ed Epstein and to the Citizen's Committee of Los Angeles. I do not share your charitable treatment of Ed Epstein because of his dishonesty and opportunism, both past and present, although I am in full agreement that his book was a major step

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forward. I have argued with Mark Lane about him on several occasions, but to no avail, since as you know, Epstein got his final walking #papers as a critic of the Warren Commission in A Citizen's Dissent. With the availability of the transcripts of most of the Executive Sessions and most of the memos and other working papers of the staff and commission, Inquest is no longer very useful, but it served a very noble purpose when published.

In regard to Garrison I share many of your misgivings but rarely express them in public because of my lack of knowledge of most of his evidence. Many of his public statements alarm me and disturb me, but what he discusses in public will never be seen in court, despite what Epstein suggests. Quite the contrary, since the man who will try Shaw is Jim Alcock, a sincere and honest man who is an excellent trial lawyer. Furthermore, I know that in some areas his evidence seems quite good and was arrived at through honorable means and fair investigation. The staff in Garrison's office varies a great deal in ability and intelligence, but at least most are very skeptical of a CIA-connected conspiracy. Their errors, in my experience, are always with regard to failure to obtain evidence which they could have gotten, rather than misinterpretation of what they have or obtaining of evidence through illegal means. Their capacity to blunder sometimes stretches the imagination. MuMu Schiambra is particularly incompetent, and ironically he is the only one on the staff who knows Garrison socially. Mark Lane makes many contributions in this department also. Tom Bethell, their "Archives researcher" is little more than a joke and both Harold Weisberg and I have had serious disagreements with him. Although I cannot pretend to speak for Vince and Harold, both are in essential agreement with all of the things I have said. Harold in particular has expressed disgust at the staff and at Jim's ability to break agreements and stab people in the back. Harold never deals with Jim anymore and also sends materials only to Louis Ivon. Vince went down for a visit last summer and same right back. When I visited last March, I worked on my own projects and helped Harold.

In terms of elements of Garrison's case, the group which is being investigated, by Weisberg, myself, and others is essentially the same one he is interested in. I don't know about his case against Shaw but do know that they had an important witness meet an untimely death this summer and Alcock is currently worried that if they lose any more they are in trouble. I am convinced that Shaw is Bertrand—something he even admitted when he was arrested without, I am convinced, being coerced into it. Bertrand is certainly not Eugene Davis as NBC, CBS, et. al. suggest. Furthermore, Ramsey Clark's statement that they had checked and cleared Shaw might be a suggestion that when they checked (FBI, that is) all New Orleans homosexuals with a first name of Clay or Clem they did at least check him, so he may not actually even be a new name in the case. (There is no clear evidence one way or the other.) The code is obviously ridiculous, although I'll have to admit that having the same number seemingly appear in both men's address books is interesting. Layten Martens, by the way, was also in Shaw's address book, and he is Ferrerie's ex-roommate. Although questions about the Sciambra notes were raised also in my mind, I doubt that Nicholas Chetta, the New Orleans corner put the thing into Russo's mind. First of all, he is supposed to be an honest man and would have nothing to gain from such an action. Secondly, I don't think that it is

Possible. On this subject I claim some expertise since I am a trained hypnotist and am familiar with the research literature which is more important in this instance than any expert's opinion. By the way, I hope to be able to research this point in the coming year and hope to obtain Garrison's help in getting all available info about the hypnosis sessions through use of the tape recording, etc. I will try to duplicate the setting if I can and will report my results, of course, no matter how they turn out. Garrison's allegations about the epileptic seizure victim are utter nonsense, just like the code, and the same goes for the storm sewer. In the case of Novel, I don't know the story, but I certainly don't believe Epstein's version. Garrison has a very good case against Novel for the munitions burglary and also has an obvious set of questions to ask him about the assassination. It would help him a great deal -to be able to convict Novel or at least bring out his CIA connections since he has been in the news. Furthermore, it is true that the Government offered to send Novel back if Garrison agreed not to question him about the assassination. In addition, the extradition papers for Bradley and for Sergio Archacha Smith are in order, and they have not been sent back. Garrison has relented on some earlier statements like the one about having a photo of Bradley being arrested in Dealy Plaza (maybe this one wasn't public). Currently, only Dick Sprague thinks the man is Bradley. He is finally beginning to discount the Richard Nagell Thing as unreliable, a point I gave him no end of trouble about since I had thoroughly researched the source of the information at some risk to my professional career. But he is still being taken in by what I regard as planted information such as the contact with French intelligence. He trusts people he should never trust. For instance, Gurvich offered to give him a color TV and help him investigate and Garrison took him in. I warned Lane about Gurvich months before he quit but, as usual, got the cold shoulder. And yet the press, Epstein, and others failed to point out that Gurvich announced the arrest of Shaw publicly and said on numerous occasions, including one just a month before quitting, that they had a strong case against Shaw. No one questioned his statement upon quitting that Garrison never had a case and that he had tried to dissuade Garrison from arresting him. Right now he may have a CIA man on his payroll who is still on the other side, and any comments about this man's loyalty serve to put one in the doghouse. I, of course, am already in there as is Weisberg. The point that I am trying to make here is that, in my opinion, Garrison has some good evidence and may have a good case against certain individuals, just as all of the evidence and conclusions of the Warren Commission were not false or tainted. But Garrison is not like the Warren Commission in that he must present his evidence against at least Shaw in court and be judged there, so I see no reason to attack him just as I see no reason to defend anything either he or Mark Lane say in public unless I know it to be the truth. The major thing that worries me about the situation is that Warren Report critics are #####put in the same boat as Garrison and are therefore, as far as most ### of the public is concerned, vulnerable to attack everytime Garrison is attacked. Weisberg has spontaneously voiced a similar concern to me several times. He currently, when speaking in public, stresses the need for the Shaw case to get into court and the need for persons whom Garrison wants extradicted to be returned to New Orleans for appearance before the grand jury. When discussing who might be involved in the assassination itself he uses his own documentation, not Garrison's public or private statements. I

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generally do the same thing, but stress the need for an independent investigation. Garrison is irrelevant to this since he can't try anyone for murder anyway. But if such an investigation is to be undertaken it will have to be by the critics, since the government avoids the subject like a hot potato. Whether or not the new "Committee to Investigate Assassinations, Inc." will fill the bill I don't know, but I am going to give it a try. (I was invited to join, but the typist mixed up my name and Gary Muir's, so an invitation was sent to him at my address.) It is difficult to imagine how such a committee could function at present with the strife in the critic community, but at least Garrison will probably play a minor role. Bud Fensterwald, who organized it, is reliable and honest, and has at least some misgivings about Garrison which I have already learned of. The Citizen's Committee of L.A. will also play only a minor role. Vince and Harold do not think that much differently from what you do, judging from your letters and letters to the editor which I have seen. None of us, for instance, think that Oswald was guilty. (cf. Oswald in New Orleans in which Weisberg suggests that LHO in New Orleans was actually the false Oswald. Joeston even picks this up in his recent writings.) Harold and I, although not so much Vince, are interested in getting down to brass tacks as to exactly who did it, how, when, where, etc. Vince is not opposed to this, but doesn't have the motivation to engage in the work and doubts that anything new can be uncovered. Some of my own work has shaken that opinion, as has some of Harold's. Basically what I am interested in is some sort of meaningful dialogue, rather than pointed and sometimes vicious letters to the editor, etc. It is a funny feeling for me, although I have never met or spoken to you, to know that you are not very active in research anymore, and at the same time honestly present your book as the best work on the assassination in every single public appearance I make. (If your book comes out in paperback ask your publisher for an accounting of sales in Minnesota.)

It may be possible to salvage the Garrison investigation, although I'm afraid that many of his character traits are here to stay. I am convinced that events central to the assassination occurred in New Orleans above and beyond Shaw--Bertrand, et. al. Some of my own work has, strangely enough, led from another distant area of the country down into anti-Castro Cubans in that area. Oswald's presence there alone, in the year preceding the assassination, makes it interesting. Sprague's work and the work of others who feel that they are working for Jim has contributed in that it has produced the raw materials for more work on the case. Garrison himself has contributed to our knowledge of what happened in Dealy Plaza by exploring witnesses like Roger Craig and Hicks who were never interviewed by independent investigators before. (By the way, I understand that Craig's 14 yr. old son is now missing.) Perhaps it cannot be salvaged, but in this case, unlike with the Commission, we are not powerless. People like Lane will make it all the more difficult, but given the stakes it is worth the try.

So, after talking your ear off, what am I suggesting? First that you join the new assassination investigation committee in hopes of being able to influence it towards the goals of impartiality and honesty. Secondly, I would very much like to have the opportunity to meet you and discuss certain elements in the case in addition to the things I am writing to you about now. I expect to be

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in Philadelphia around Christmas time and would welcome the opportunity to be able to come up to New York and meet with you. I am not asking for a definite answer, but just an invitation to call you at that time and see if you are in the mood. I had hoped to contact you this past summer but was not in the best of health due to a serious beating by a mob on the 4th of July suffered after I came to the aid of a lone victim and myself became the victim. The resultant loss of vision in one eye made it a good deal more difficult for me to get around at first, but I am now adjusting to it. (You may have read about this in the New York Times.) In any event, I would appreciate a short reply when you get the chance.

Sincerely yours,

Gary Richard Schoener

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P.S. Please do not construe anything in this letter as coming from anyone but myself. I sincerely doubt that Harold and Vince would say any of the things I attribute to them to you in person, due to the polarization of opinions and arguments about Garrison and certain inevitable personality clashes. If anyone clashes on evidence, fine, but let's remove all reasons which cause disagreements such as Vince's tendency towards stubbornness, Harold's egocentricity, and whatever my vices are.